Facsimile of a sketch by CAPTAIN PERCY, U. S. A. Copied from a map shown him by the Abbot of the Rose Cross at the Abbey of Northumbria.

Centuries Apart.

BY

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PREFACE.

A GENERATION has been born, grown to maturity, married, and now trots its children upon its knee, since the fall of the curtain upon the tragedy of the Civil War in America. Many of those who filled rôles in that tragedy are yet permitted to cast a shadow under "the pale glimpses of the moon." Many more have passed on to the land of shadows.

Among that great company of players were a number who were cast, for a brief season, in parts to be performed upon the boards of a very distant and entirely unknown theatre. On that remote stage it was fated that they should play their farewell engagement before this world's audience. Nor lingers yet in the realm of sunshine one who in his day constructed the following account from the dilapidated and water-worn diary of one of these strollers. The compiler is the one who once or twice in the earlier chapters of the book refers to himself as "I." Toward the end, he incidentally calls himself "the writer;"

and, the diary being henceforth blank, he is compelled to carry the tale onward to a finish in the closing chapter by the "post rehearsal," if I may so call it, of his own part. This is appropriate enough, for he was on the stage during the last scene, from the rising of the curtain to the fluttering downward of the green baize. Alas, yes! the dark curtain has indeed slowly and sadly fallen on his bright, brave, cheery, manly life; he is "heard no more!"

Even the diary itself, of priceless value as it must have been to the family of its author, — of incalculable interest and importance as it might have been to the people of the United States, — is gone forever. It went to ashes in the great Boston fire, in November, 1872.

There is a possibility that its loss may have been a misfortune of world-wide proportions. Could it have been established that this diary was constructed by a sane man, uncrazed by the fearful experience of disaster and suffering through which he had passed, nothing further could have been desired. The honor and integrity of the author were beyond a questioning thought, even. And in such case the little dilapidated book might have proved a chart, the study of which would perhaps have incited the Great Republic to but stretch forth her hand southward, and gather a laurel-wreath of glory such as glistened upon the brow of Spain after 1492.

I have given the story almost entirely in the language of the compiler, and, with one exception, have used the real names of the characters. The "Captain Arthur Percy" (who, if this were a novel, would be the hero) appears under a pseudonym so slightly differing from his family name that the obscuration is scarcely noticeable; in fact, it is practically but a synonymous form. Centuries of singularly varying etymological construction of certain family names, each succeeding generation slightly altering the spelling or pronunciation according to environment, whim, or perhaps owing to fortune's changes or fashion's behests, have brought about in the end curious varieties of the original. "Original," we arrogantly say, with glib tongue. Why, that which we designate by such assumedly primeval term may be but the evolution from eons of cognomens. But to return to earth once more, and take up our subject. The ancient Percy family name was Piercie. It has varied since to Peircie, Peirce, more modernly Pearce, or more properly Pierce, as well as Percy.

Possibly some readers may be as much interested in trying to guess which of the above was the real name of the young officer referred to, as they will be by a perusal of the tale itself.

I sincerely trust that no enthusiastic extracts from the diary descriptive of South Polar feminine loveliness may tempt any young American viking to turn

the prow of his yacht in an Antarctic direction. Probably there 's little likelihood of that, however, for beauty is not sought in these later days. Moreover, let him reflect that 't is many a year since these descriptions were penned. Time cures all things, even beauty; the rose fades, and

"No hay pajaros en los nidos de anteaño."

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CHAPTER I

A CAPE BOUNDARY HISTORY

Among the secret archives of the War Department was a batch of despatches and reports which had not seen the light since they were pigeon-holed in 1865. These papers had been unearthed, so to speak, in the course of some overhauling in 1878, and having been looked into sufficiently to ascertain their nature by a clerk acting under orders, had been laid aside for future close examination. Subsequently they were accidentally destroyed by fire, only a mutilated page or two being left to show that such papers had ever existed.

A chapter of history, with a rather remarkable story included therein, would thus have been lost to the world, but for the diary of the only surviving officer of a secret expedition, organized and despatched in the last year of the civil war. Although

this expedition met with complete destruction, yet before that consummation it had accomplished, in the important direction of discovery, more than has ever before been done in the part of the world where it found itself. It does not matter that the discoveries were accidental, being due to the agencies of winds, currents, and storms. It is enough that they were made.

The private diary from which this account has been compiled is rightly regarded, by the family of the officer who kept it, as a most precious heirloom. The publication is now permitted only because it has been recently ascertained, with certainty, that no other history of the expedition exists, since the destruction of the reports originally in possession of the War Department, which were made up by this officer from this very diary. It may be proper to say here that the officer in question, who was, as before stated, the only survivor of the expedition, was upon the staff of the General in command, and although not of high rank, was a trusted aide and personal friend of the General. His opportunities for observation and obtaining information were therefore, from the very inception of the undertaking, the best possible. With this introduction, we will now proceed to a consideration of the details of the story.

It would appear that a number of Mexican gentlemen — citizens of high social position, but unconnected with the Juarez government — had determined that it was indispensable that President Lincoln's ad-

mini-tration should extend material aid to Mexico in her desperate struggle for existence as a republic. They felt — and this opinion was in strong measure shared at Washington — that the cause of Napoleon III. and his unhappy cat's-paw Maximilian was more or less connected with that of the Southern Confederacy; that if the Emperor became absolute master of Mexico, there could be no doubt that he would at once send help to our rebels. A strong deputation of these gentlemen visited President Lincoln, with the greatest secrecy, at Washington. They came, ostensibly, only in a private capacity, but their errand was known and heartily approved by the patriot government of Mexico. They represented, most urgently, that the cause of constitutional liberty was threatened by common enemies, and that, unless the French power could be crushed in Mexico, it would, sooner or later, become a dangerous factor in the struggle for national life then going on in the United States.

The outcome of this embassy, if it may be called such, was that an expedition was fitted out with the utmost secrecy and despatch. It consisted of two small skeleton brigades of infantry, together about twenty-four hundred men; five batteries of light artillery, one battery of horse artillery, and three battalions of cavalry. These were all veteran troops, made up entirely of picked men, the companies not comprising over thirty men each. It was intended that they should form the nucleus of a much larger force, the organizations to be filled by recruiting, when they should

have arrived at their destination. Each battalion of cavalry was to form the basis for a full regiment, and was commanded by a colonel, with the complement of officers for a regiment. The officers for the whole force were selected, from the generals of brigade down to second lieutenants, and were all tried soldiers. The commanding officer was a very brilliant young man, who had shown great capacity and had distinguished himself, but who had not, until now, held an independent command. He was chosen for the position by the Lieutenant-General commanding the armies.

No cavalry or artillery horses were taken, owing to the length of the voyage in contemplation; but many of the officers chose to risk their own animals on the ships.

The troops were embarked on four fine and very swift steamers of large size, which had been altered over sufficiently to convert them into heavily armed transports. The fleet was commanded by a commodore.

The expedition was ordered to proceed, with the utmost despatch, to its destination, which was a port in Southern California, sailing round Cape Horn. The plan was that, after recruiting the force there to its maximum strength, it should be held in readiness, in certain eventualities, to move down the coast again, land at a Western Mexican port, and march to aid Juarez in expelling the French and dethroning Maximilian.

The fleet sailed in September. Arrangements had been made for coaling at Rio, a large steamer loaded with coal having been despatched some weeks before the departure of the expedition, with orders to await its arrival at that port. Circumstances, however, rendered this plan abortive.

The voyage down the coast and thence into the South Atlantic was uneventful, the ships keeping well together; but after passing Cape St. Roque there came a change. A most terrible storm set in from the north, which lasted for five days. After moderating a little, it was succeeded by a series of furious tempests from the north and northwest, lasting, with little intermission, for weeks. The ships had become so short of coal that they were compelled to run under sail, saving what little fuel remained for bitter emergencies, and they were blown nearly a thousand miles out of their course. These storms hardly cleared enough to allow of observations being taken, when they were followed by others from the same quarter, which lasted almost uninterruptedly for several days more. Old sailors on board the fleet said that they had never known or experienced, in those latitudes, storms of such singular violence and intensity. The ships were so crippled by the loss of spars, sails, and rigging, as to be able to do nothing more than simply run before the gale and try to keep afloat. When at last the weather settled enough for them to make out where they were, they found themselves among drift ice and far down toward the Antarctic

Circle, much nearer the longitude of the Cape of Good Hope than that of Cape Horn. The ships, badly battered as they were, had, as if by a miracle, remained together.

The storms had apparently subsided, but the weather was very cold, and ice rendered navigation dangerous. The wind was still fresh from the northwest, and they proceeded to repair damages as well as they could, all the while steering southeast, the only direction in which clear water lay. Suddenly, on the second morning after the storm had moderated, they found themselves in a current setting strongly and decidedly south, the water being as warm as that of the Gulf Stream. The air was correspondingly temperate, and, to their surprise, there appeared to be but little ice in this current, which was about twenty miles wide. On its edges were long lines of icebergs and field ice, evidently floating northward. There was thus a lane of clear, warm water, in which the ships were drifting with some rapidity southward, under the influence of the current and of the northwest wind, which still continued. This state of things had existed for a day and a night.

The next morning the captain of one of the ships signalled for permission to come on board the flagship. He proved to have information which might be of great importance. He stated that, some ten years previously, he had been, in November, at Valparaiso. His elder brother, commanding an American clipper ship, arrived at that port after a

very remarkable experience. He had been on his way round the Cape of Good Hope from the East Indies, when he encountered, after entering the South Atlantic, a series of most furious storms from the northward, which blew him for many hundred miles out of his course, and all at once he found himself in ice. After beating about for a day or two in great danger, and having several narrow escapes from destruction, he became enveloped in thick fog. At the same time the ship entered open water, which was quite warm; and when, after some days of fog, the sun appeared, and a northerly breeze set in, the ship proved to be in about the centre of a channel, at least twelve to fifteen miles in width, and from observations taken it was certain that they were drifting southward. The ship was at once put about, and attempted to beat to northward through this channel until clear of the ice, but to no purpose. She slowly and steadily fell to leeward. After several days of this drifting, the current of warm water divided, a part of it flowing almost due west. This branch was more or less filled with field ice; but the captain took advantage of it to work westward and, eventually, northward again, as fast as the ice would permit. After two weeks of this experience, he succeeded in gaining the open sea, and made for Cape Horn, which he doubled without much difficulty, and in due time arrived at Valparaiso. He considered his adventure as of the greatest importance, and proposed to report it fully, both to the govern-

ment at Washington and to the British Admiralty; but after sailing from Valparaiso, his ship was never heard from again, and his story perished with him.

From what his brother recollected of his statements relating to the latitude and longitude of this warm ocean current running toward the pole, it was judged that the ships of the expedition had struck the same current. This seemed the more probable as a slight change of wind brought on a dense fog, which lasted four days, during which time the ships still drifted steadily southward, — as was learned by their keeping close to the westerly side of the channel, and finding that the bergs and floes were moving in the opposite direction. In fact, one of the ships got out of the current and among field ice, and was extricated only after two days' hard work and great suffering from cold, the temperature being many degrees lower than it was in the centre of the warm stream. They had hugged the westerly edge of the channel so as to be sure not to miss the place where the stream divided, part flowing westward, according to the sea-captain's statement. The fog lifted, and it was clear for a day, only to shut down more thickly than ever; and no sign as yet appeared of any westerly passage. In fact, the stream now took a turn almost east of south, and the navigators began to notice gulls and other sea-birds; and, one day, a piece of floe drifted by them, having several seals upon it. All this indicated the proximity of land; and they were not surprised, one morning after the fog had

entirely disappeared, to see on the southern horizon cliffs and mountains covered with snow, toward which they were diagonally drifting, their course being south-southeast. On a nearer approach they found that the coast-line turned southward, and the warm stream skirted the shores. At nightfall they were within five miles of land, and as yet the lead had given no soundings. The night was very bright, the stars shining with remarkable brilliancy, except when they paled before a splendid aurora. Meanwhile there was neither wind nor sea. The water was almost as smooth as a pond; and still no soundings, while the ships drifted nearer and nearer the shore, with hardly any steerage-way. Toward midnight orders were given to get up steam, using the little coal remaining, which had been hoarded with the greatest care against such an emergency. At about three o'clock the next morning soundings were obtained at thirty fathoms, and the ships immediately anchored. As day dawned, it appeared that they were just at the entrance of an almost completely land-locked harbor, a mile or more in width, and reaching several miles inland. The land in the neighborhood was high, but sloped down to the shore, and there were mountains in the distance. The snow along the coast was gone, and the country appeared covered with a kind of scrub pine, mingled with other arctic, or rather antarctic, vegetation.

All evidences pointed to the rapid advance of the antarctic spring, short enough at best, and almost

immediately merging into the brief summer of that latitude. The temperature was quite mild, except at night.

Early in the day an expedition was fitted out, consisting of several of the boats of the squadron, to sound the waters of the bay and learn if there were safe anchorage for the ships, which sadly needed more extensive repairs than had been possible to make at sea. A fine sandy beach was soon discovered within the harbor, and advantage was taken of it to land the troops for refreshment and exercise. Their long confinement on shipboard they had borne wonderfully well, there having been very little sickness up to this time, and no deaths.

The rocks along the coast teemed with many sorts of waterfowl, and the waters were full of fish, all furnishing a very agreeable change of diet from the regular sea-rations.

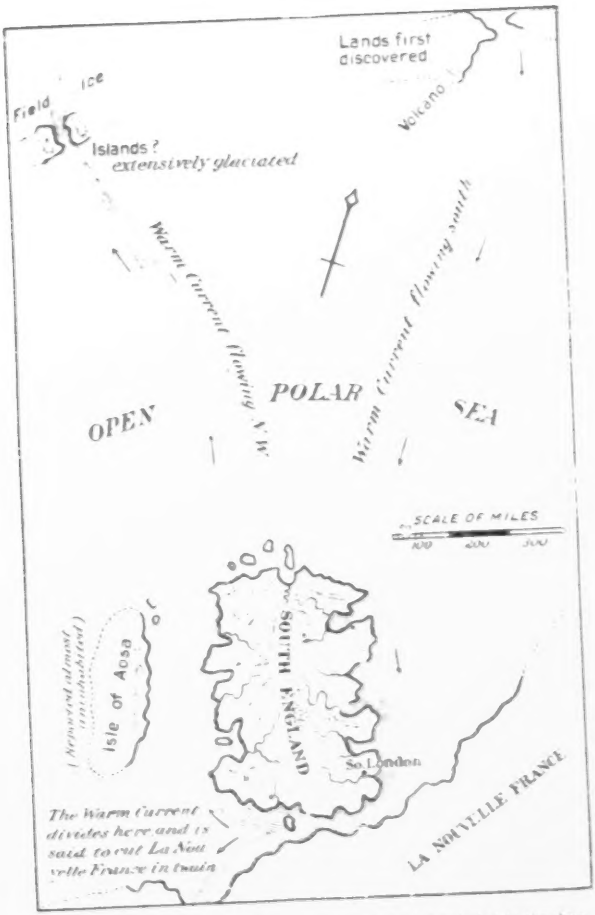
There proved to be plenty of water and excellent anchorage in the bay, and the ships all entered and anchored in good positions. About noon a boat that had proceeded up the harbor returned with startling intelligence. A ship had been discovered at anchor, close to the shore of a wooded point some three miles inland. She was dismasted and abandoned, all stores and supplies having been removed to the nearest beach, together with all her furniture of every description. This had been used in shelters built under the lee of a precipice on the shore, which had evidently been occupied for winter quarters. A

rifle of English make was found near the cabins, but not another tool or implement of any description. The place seemed to have been deserted for at least a year. Down by the beach an ominous discovery suggested the fate of many of the crew. It was a row of graves, partly formed of stones heaped high. There were two dug out of the soil, but still covered with large rocks, probably with a view to protection from wild animals. The survivors of the ship's company had gone, and left no trace. But the strangest and most practically interesting part of the discovery was that the ship, which might have swung to her rusty cables there for two or three years, was laden with coal. Nothing could well have happened more opportune, for coal was the one thing needed to enable the ships of the expedition to make head against the warm current and return upon their track.

Arrangements were made at once for coaling from this windfall. The ships were successively laid alongside of the hulk, and the coal was put upon each in proportion to the quantity needed. There was not enough to afford them nearly a full supply, but the amount which was found, it was estimated, would probably last long enough to carry them well into the South Atlantic. Several days were consumed in this way and in making necessary repairs, during which examinations were made for purposes of discovery in various directions; but no topographical differences were observed between the country

adjacent to the bay and the regions visited. No traces were found of the survivors of the crew of the coal-ship, although it was evident that a party had gone inland, after the abandonment of the vessel and the death of so many of her company.

When they were ready to sail, the question arose as to whether it might not be possible to reach the Atlantic in some other and safer way than that by which they had come; and it was determined to skirt the coast southward for a short distance, to see if the land were an island. If so, the warm current might flow round it, and return to the ocean west of the longitude of Cape Horn. Acting upon the possibility, they proceeded southward along the coast, still finding themselves in the stream. No more ice was seen, and land was observed in the horizon to the eastward. They were, evidently, between large islands, or in a very broad strait, although they soon lost soundings. On the night of the second day after setting sail, they saw a bright light, as of a conflagration, down the coast along which they were running. This increased steadily until morning, when a large column of smoke took its place; and as they proceeded, they found they were nearing a volcano in eruption. By noon they were abreast of this mountain, which proved to be the first of a long range extending westward, and the coast at this point took a turn directly west. The eruption was a quiet one, with very infrequent explosions, only vast masses of flame and smoke rising from the cone



MAP OF THE OPEN POLAR SEA, showing the various Land touched at by the ships, as well as the course of the Warm Current. — Ensemble of a pen and ink sketch by CAPTAIN PERCY.

These black clouds of smoke drifted off to the southward before the northerly breeze, and completely darkened the surface of the sea for many miles. It was unsafe navigating in the murky obscurity, and the fleet consequently steered south-southeast to avoid it, until it should be clear enough to change the course to the westward.

Meanwhile the voyagers began to realize a wonderful fact. Here, in the region of perpetual ice, they had reached an open polar sea. For centuries all efforts to reach an open arctic polar sea have been unavailing; but, by a most singular chance, an open antarctic polar sea appeared to have been found. In every direction, to the east, south, and west, the expanse of blue water stretched away to the horizon. It was impossible to judge what was best to be done. Far away on the starboard quarter a mountainous coast lost itself in the western horizon. Astern they could discern a dim line of misty cliffs, as far to the eastward as the glass could reach. Through a narrow strait dividing these shores they had come. Did it shut them out from the known world? They decided to hold their course out into the open sea, steering southwest; but toward the night of the second day after, they thought they saw indications of land off the starboard bow. So they changed their course due south once more; and when day broke there was surely land to the southeastward, which by evening they were near enough to distinguish clearly. Meanwhile they had not seen land

to the westward for two days, and the long swell from the northwest indicated a broad expanse of ocean in that direction.

At sunset the voyagers, then steering south-southeast, found that they were moving down a coast to the east of them, and by nightfall land also loomed up directly in their course. Upon this discovery, they deemed it prudent to lie to for the night, which was very bright however. For several nights the aurora had been altogether the finest they had ever seen. At daybreak they found that they had been drifting southward, and were near enough to the land to be able to distinguish some of its features. The remark was made early that day by the General commanding to the Commodore: "This looks like the entrance from the North Sea to the English Channel." He little thought what significance his words bore.

Meanwhile the ships were advancing into a strait. They were still in the warm current, which evidently washed the shores of the lands before them. Toward noon orders were given to "slow down;" and soon after this, to their great astonishment, a sail was seen on the port bow, and immediately afterwards one to the eastward. This latter vessel approached them to within six miles, and then changed her course, crowded on all sail, and evidently tried to escape from the unknown strangers. The other vessel held on her course until within a mile, when she, too, put about and did her best to get out of the way. But

the steamer to leeward was too near her, and after a chase of twenty minutes, overhauled her. She proved to be a small ship such as no one has seen for centuries, but which those familiar with naval architecture of past ages would have recognized as of mediæval model, — a high bow, bowsprit forty-five degrees in the air, a spar like a yard across it, a very high poop and castellated stern, with a few small, curious-looking cannon running their slim muzzles from the ports.

The steamer ran up the American colors, and immediately the royal standard of England, or something very like it, was set by the stranger. By this time the vessels were but a few hundred feet apart. The little ship had been heeled away under her press of sail, so that her crew were invisible; but she now, finding escape impossible, changed her course so as to bring her on an even beam, and shortened sail. As she did so, the steamer ran alongside, and the companies of both ships had the opportunity to see each other, and to indulge the extreme amazement to which the mutual examination gave rise.

Amidships upon the stranger's deck, and crowded along her bulwarks, was a multitude of men in singular dress and wearing head coverings of strange device. Among them, here and there, were people with steel caps; and some wore corselets or coats of mail. These bore halberds or battle-axes. In the forecastle (literally, in this case, forecastle,

the high and turreted bow) stood men clad in green, with long bows, and each having a sheaf of arrows over his shoulder. But on the poop was the most interesting and gorgeous spectacle. This little quarter-deck was filled, nay, crowded, with persons in complete armor, which flashed in the sunlight. On their helmets were generally simple plumes, but in some cases crests of fanciful shape. Some suits of armor were plain black, some inlaid in parts with gold or silver, and some were of various colors, one being entirely white. There were several ecclesiastics in the assembly; one being evidently a cardinal, judging from his scarlet robes. Here and there stood young squires, holding lances which bore pennons of various shapes and devices.

It was the Middle Ages over again, and the Americans gazed as if in a dream. Evidently the other ship's company were similarly affected, for they stared at the steamer in intense wonder, not unmixed with alarm, as it seemed. All this time the stranger had been taking in sail, and now lay to, apparently waiting to see what the American ship would do. The captain of the latter, however, considered it proper to await the arrival upon the scene of the flagship, which had been some miles to windward, but was now approaching rapidly. In a few moments she passed under the stern of the stranger, and ran alongside of her about a couple of hundred feet to leeward. Her first lieutenant stepped to the side, trumpet in hand.

"Ship ahoy!" he hailed. "What ship is that?"

A herald, as he seemed, in gorgeous panoply, advanced to the highest part of the castle on the poop-deck, and answered, shouting something in a tongue seemingly compounded of a Scotch brogue and Yorkshire dialect. Not one word in ten was intelligible at first; but gradually it began to dawn upon the hearers that he was speaking English, after all, — a kind of English, to be sure, that belonged to the time of Henry the Eighth, or even before his era, but still English for all that.

The General commanding ordered one of his aides to have a boat lowered, and to board the ship of the Plantagenets, or Tudors, or whatever reigning family it might be; and presenting his compliments to the chief baron or officer, to say that he would pay him a visit of ceremony, if agreeable, at once. This aide, consequently, arrayed in full uniform, was rowed to the strange ship, which he boarded by means of a rope-ladder passed over the side for his accommodation. He was received by a knight in full armor with his visor up, who extended his mailed hand and gave the American hearty greeting. The latter delivered himself of his message with all punctiliousness. The knight looked puzzled, seemed to be trying desperately to comprehend the words of the visitor, and at last appeared to get at the drift of the latter's remarks; but his reply was utterly unintelligible. Seeing this, a priest standing not far away stepped forward, and after saying a few words apolo-

getically to the knight, addressed the American in good Latin, although with a pronunciation which demanded all the other's wits to understand. Luckily, the aide was a young fellow only three years out of the university, and not rusty in his classics.

Now, this staff-officer was the very man from whose journal this account is compiled; so we have the story at first hand.

The reverend father spoke rather prolix and formal Latin, and after a short time, having inadvertently dropped into English, the American proposed that they continue to use it; and they found it possible to do so, speaking very slowly and carefully. In this account the dialect of this strange people will be rendered into modern English only when it may be too obscure for quick comprehension. The journal of the aide has it in the original, and explains in notes the meanings of certain words and phrases or idioms of unknown derivation, which clearly never came from the mediæval English. From the priest's words the visitor gathered these facts.

The vessel was the "Red Rose of Lancaster," the finest war-ship of the navy of his Majesty Henry the Ninth, King of South England.

"And what was the kingdom of South England?" the wondering stranger inquired.

"I do not marvel that you know not of us," the priest replied. "The outside world has probably never learned how we founded the nation which you

find here, under most miraculous circumstances, undoubtedly to the end that we might spread the true faith to the uttermost bounds of the earth. It has grown to be a great power; and our grievous trouble is that we are confined by the belt of eternal ice to this part of the world, and have never been able to force our way north against the powerful and most beneficent Warm Current, which is at once our preserver and our jailer. But to reply to your question would entail a long story, and his Royal Highness awaits your presentation. The 'Red Rose' is commanded by the noble knight and gallant sailor, Sir Wilfred Blount of the Hawk's Nest. The King, in his gracious pleasure, having been pleased to permit Prince Harry of Lancaster, the heir apparent (whom Heaven preserve to rule long over us after his Majesty the King shall, in fulness of years and glory, have passed to his reward), to make this cruise, he is accordingly on board, with many of the first nobles of the realm in his train. This gentleman who first addressed you is Lord Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, and Master of the Horse to his Royal Highness. And," added the priest, with a low obeisance, "I am the poor Father Johannes, Abbot of Westminster. Whom have I the honor to present to Lord Percy?"

"Reverend sir," replied the American, bowing low in his turn, "I am what you would understand as an officer of the military household of the American General Vaughn, commanding an expeditionary force

from the armies of the United States of America, a great nation whom you know not of. It is neither a kingdom nor an empire, but a republic, and can best be described, so as to make the nature of its government comprehensible to you, as being in some respects similar to the republic of ancient Rome or that of Switzerland. We have no princes or nobility whatever, but are all plain citizens. We make very little of pedigree, — in fact, as one of the modern English poets says, 'smile at the claims of long descent;' yet still, as a matter which may be of interest to Lord Percy, I will say that I chance to know that I myself am descended from the Percies of Northumberland, and am probably of kin to him. I am Captain Percy, of the staff of the United States Army, at your gracious service."

The Abbot then presented the officer to Lord Percy, who welcomed him with great heartiness on board the ship. They found that by talking slowly and distinctly they could make themselves mutually understood. The Master of the Horse then conducted Captain Percy aft to the quarter-deck, upon which, surrounded by nobles, stood Prince Harry.

The latter was a boy of about eighteen, tall and fair, but having an expression in which an ill-natured haughtiness contended comically with unconcealed curiosity. He was arrayed in a suit of bright steel armor, lavishly inlaid with gold, the three Norman lions being conspicuous on the breastplate. His helmet had a crest composed of feathers curiously fashioned to represent red and white roses.

Lord Percy dropped on one knee and said, "Will your Royal Highness graciously permit me to present the Captain Percy, an officer of the household of the gentleman commanding the army on board the great ships from the outside world?"

The Captain bowed low. The Prince glared at him with insolent wonder, and finally extended his hand, which the American innocently grasped and slightly pressed. But the Prince snatched his hand away with the greatest fury, exclaiming, —

"Varlet, where is your knee? And are you a prince, that you kiss not my hand, but touch it as I were a churl?"

The American officer was astounded. "I beg your pardon," he said, "but I came to bring the respectful compliments of my General, who will, with your gracious leave, pay you a visit of ceremony, accompanied by the Commodore commanding the fleet, with their respective staffs. My errand was that of the highest courtesy, and if I am unfortunate enough to have been remiss in showing it, I crave your pardon. As for my knee, I am compelled to say that not only an American officer and gentleman, but the lowest soldier or sailor in the service of the Great Republic, and the humblest citizen who lives under her flag, kneels only to his God. And no American would kiss any hand, except that of his lady-love."

"Now, by the Red Rose of Lancaster," began the enraged Prince; but he paused, and looked angrily

around, for a low murmur of disapprobation made itself heard all about.

"How, my Lords," he rejoined! "shall I be bearded on my own ship, not alone by this insolent stranger, but by the black looks of my own vassals? I tell you, sirs —"

But a nobleman in bright armor stepped forth, and with a profound obeisance interrupted the boy in these words, which, although propitiatory in form, were authoritative in manner of expression: —

"I cry you mercy, your Royal Highness; but deign to permit me a word with you aside."

"Oh, 't is ever thus, my Lord Duke and uncle," replied the Prince, peevishly, "but have it as you will. My royal father hath enjoined upon me, as I were a babe —" His words died away in angry mutterings. All present retired a little, especially Captain Percy, followed by his friend the Abbot, who said to him in a low tone: "That is his Grace the Duke of Cornwall, uncle and governor of the Prince. He is a most noble and wise man."

The Duke conversed quietly for a few moments with the Prince, who seemed impressed by what he said. With fickle curiosity he turned again to the American, saying more gently than before, —

"Approach once more. His Grace holdeth that your ways be different from ours, and that you, however clumsily it may be, intend a courtesy to us. Say to your chief — of whatever rank he is — that he hath our gracious permission to pay his duty to

us immediately. And I wish to visit your ship, and see what manner of men ye are."

"The General will bring his invitation, your Royal Highness, and you will be received with all ceremony on our flagship, the 'Bald Eagle.' I have the honor to bid you good-morning, sir. Good-day to you all, gentlemen." And with due courtesies to the Prince and his train, the Captain withdrew, accompanied to the ship's side by the Master of the Horse and the Abbot.

Suddenly, however, Captain Percy turned, just as he was about to go on board his boat. "My Lord," he said, "I bethink myself of an important thing, which will enable our respective ships to show proper honor to each other's flag. May I have the favor of a word with your captain?"

"Certes, it would be gross discourtesy for me to refuse so light a boon," replied the South-Englishman; and turning to a short, choleric-looking man who stood near, he said, —

"Sir Wilfred Blount, we crave the pleasure of presenting Captain Percy, of the household of the American General Vaughn, that you may in honor meet."

The parties thus introduced exchanged ceremoniously the due greetings, and the American then said: —

"Sir Wilfred, as our ships will desire to honor each other's national colors (which is our nautical name for flag or standard), I doubt not that you will

present me with a flag of South England to take to my Commodore, — who is the commander of the fleet, — that he may have it to display at masthead so as to salute it on occasions of ceremony. And I on my part will engage to send you at once a new banner of the Republic of the United States of America in return for your courtesy."

"Assuredly I shall esteem it matter of grace to give you a banner," growled the old knight, hoarsely, "and especially sith it is to be displayed on so noble a ship. And certes, the beauty of your bright standard shall in nowise be dimmed by the honors it receives from being set on his Highness's 'Red Rose of Lancaster.'"

Having delivered himself with gruff politeness of this sentiment, Sir Wilfred ordered a flag to be fetched. It was of a woollen stuff, and showed a white field with a red cross quartering it. In the upper inner quarter was a cluster of nine red roses, and against the color of these were twined three white roses. In the three other quarters were the three Norman lions, one in each. When this flag was brought, two squires unrolled and spread it, advancing so as to display it between them. As it was borne toward the American officer, he stepped out opposite its centre, drew his sword, and saluted it in true military style. Then he sheathed his weapon, and the banner was rolled up ready to be sent on board the American flagship. But he said: —

"I will myself bear your banner, Sir Wilfred. No

other hand shall touch it until I deliver it to the captain of our ship."

All this, if a little beyond the ordinary thing, was quite politic, and produced an agreeable impression upon the beholders.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEETING OF THE SIXTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

> O brave new world, that has such people in 't!
>
> *The Tempest.*

WHEN Percy reached the flagship again and reported, instant preparation was made by the General to visit the South English ship. He invited the Commodore to accompany him, and, together with their staffs, they proceeded on board the "Red Rose." They were received with great ceremony, and the Prince in his wonder and curiosity bore himself quite like a gentleman. The visitors were shown over the "Red Rose," and were intensely interested in all they saw. Those among them who were sufficiently well read found that the ship, in build, armament, and general arrangements, was not far in advance of the men-of-war of the sixteenth century. The cabins and quarters of the Prince and his suite were sumptuous in some respects, squalid in others. The portion of the vessel allotted to the crew, men-at-arms, and indeed to most of the officers, would not compare in cleanliness or comfort with those on board the meanest coaster of these days. In fact, as a rule, dirt and foul smells below decks ruled supreme. The ship

mounted quite a battery of small-bore guns, not one of them, however, carrying a heavier ball than three pounds. They were cast fancifully from iron or brass, some of them having a dragon's head and some a lion's, at the muzzle. The powder was coarse-grained and dirty, and the balls were of lead or iron. The ship had a beak or prow plated with iron, somewhat similar to that of an ancient Roman war galley, above which the bowsprit extended. The three short thick masts had each a regular castle-turret at its top, strongly protected, and filled with archers and arquebusiers. The mode of attack by such a ship evidently included ramming, and the armament, aside from the guns, indicated that fighting at close quarters was the general custom. Long lances and pikes were in racks along the bulwarks. A body of arquebusiers, carrying the ancient firearm from which they derived their name, was drawn up amidships, and in the high, castle-like structure at the bow was placed a score or so of archers bearing the celebrated English long-bow. Some of these men wore steel caps, and a few had corselets or shirts of mail; but the majority were in buff or green jerkins, with a red or white rose rudely embroidered across the breast. These emblems were also painted upon the defensive armor of the other men-at-arms.

After a most interesting examination of this medi æval ship and company, the General Vaughn extended an urgent invitation to the Prince and his nobles to visit the American fleet. It was eagerly accepted,

and the American Commodore offered the use of the boats of the squadron to bring the party on board.

The visitors then took their leave, General Vaughn saying at parting, "Your Royal Highness must come prepared to spend the rest of the day with us, for we shall pray the honor of the presence of our distinguished guest and his suite at dinner."

In half an hour's time a dozen boats, each in charge of an officer in dress uniform, the crew in full rig, and the American flag flying from each boat's stern, pulled alongside the "Red Rose of Lancaster," and the Prince and his train were received on board with due ceremony, Captain Percy representing the General, and the Commodore's chief-of-staff representing him. As the boats started for the American ship, then lying about a quarter of a mile to leeward, with the other steamers astern of her, suddenly all the yards of the vessels were manned, and the South English ensign run up. At the same instant the big guns began to thunder and roar a salute. The Prince was evidently very much startled, as well as bewildered, by the sight which met his eyes, and almost stunned by the terrific din, and there was an expression of doubt and anxiety visible on the faces of more than one of the company. However, in a few moments they were enveloped in the smoke from the guns, and then suddenly found themselves alongside of the landing-stage of the flagship, which the long, gentle swell easily permitted to be launched. The Prince and his knights, all in full armor, were assisted to the deck.

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Here were drawn up in two lines and in four ranks a regiment of infantry on the starboard, and a battalion of the troopers and the artillerymen on the port side. A band stationed near struck up "God save the Queen," for the want of something more appropriate, and amid the stunning roar of the heavy guns, the bray of trumpets and the thunder of drums (while three rousing cheers from the sailors who manned the yards added a sort of tenor to the awful noise), the now thoroughly dazed Prince and his bewildered nobles were received by the General and Commodore, supported by their staffs and officers, and conducted to the quarter-deck, where seats had been prepared for them. The Prince's party consisted of some forty nobles and ecclesiastics, the latter including the Cardinal Primate of South England, as he was entitled, and Captain Percy's friend, the Abbot of Westminster. The meeting of all these gentlemen and the mutual introductions were conducted with great form and ceremony, such as the American commanders judged would be agreeable to these visitors, as it seemed, from the Middle Ages; and it is probably the only instance recorded where the Past has been introduced to the Present under such conditions.

Although the American officers showed every polite attention possible to their guests, yet it was some time before they could get any intelligible replies from them, or succeed in awakening them from the trance of utterly astonished bewilderment in which they seemed to dream. Finally the Duke of Cornwall

recovered himself in a measure, and said to General Vaughn: —

"Our noble host and his worthy officers must, perforce, pardon what in us must seem to them to be churlish amazement; for, by Our Lady, the like of what we see to-day hath never before been imagined in wildest dreams. We should make no doubt it were all sorcery, were it not that we must now begin to realize what wonders there be in the outside world from which our fathers came so many ages ago. Think us not lacking in breeding, noble sir, that we are so far speechless, in presence of such wondrous things; for an it were not for your knightly courtesy in thus kindly welcoming his Royal Highness and us, loyal subjects of his Greatest Majesty, King Henry the Ninth, we should give ourselves up as being under the power of enchantment."

The American General smiled, as he replied: "Your Royal Highness, and noble and reverend gentlemen, I beg you to feel yourselves at home upon our ship. I assure you that we feel as much wonder and interest in meeting you as you can in seeing us. Think of it, illustrious guests, — your very land and existence are now for the first time made known to any of the inhabitants of the outside world, as you properly call it. And as far as we yet can see or judge, you are living as our common ancestors lived in Old England, three or four hundred years ago. Consider the delight we have in discovering you, and in establishing, as we hope, a lasting communication

and friendship with a hitherto unknown kindred nation. You would appear to be yet in the charming age of chivalry and poesy. We are far past that, and we exist in the hard, matter-of-fact way which has come upon the world outside. Doubtless we have made vast advances in many respects; but we greatly think that, in matters of chivalry, courage, and in many of the manly virtues, we might learn of you. But, your Highness, this is no time for me to spend in moralizing. It were better to invite you all to the cabin, when, after breaking bread together, we will show you what may be interesting to you about the ship."

The company then proceeded to the cabin, preceded by the General, escorting the Prince. There was some confusion in arranging "the order of their going," as the rules of precedence were evidently very strict at the South English court, and it was necessary for the senior aide of the General, who was directed to arrange these matters, to call upon the Prince's major-domo, a certain Lord Warwick. Only the highest officers of the American army and fleet sat at table, as room was limited. But now appeared a difficulty which the host had not foreseen. Not a guest knew the use of a fork or spoon, and the knives were entirely different from those to which they were accustomed. General Vaughn was obliged to explain the use of the table implements; this he did in such a way as to prevent any awkward feeling among the guests, who took the situation in the best of humor,

and laughed over their own ignorance of nineteenth century table usages. The viands were mostly strange to them; still, they expressed the utmost satisfaction, and plainly much enjoyed the feast. Fortunately there was plenty of game in the larder, thanks to the shooting at the land first discovered, and it was not necessary to confine the dinner to salt or canned meats. The guests proved to be very moderate in the use of wine. In fact, as was afterward found, the South English considered immoderate drinking as in the highest degree swinish, and drunkenness was almost unknown among them. Tea and coffee they evidently did not appreciate, plainly partaking of these only as a matter of politeness to their hosts.

But when the cigars were lighted, a scene ensued that the Americans had not anticipated. General Vaughn being at the head of the table, with the Prince upon his right and the Cardinal upon his left, cigars were passed to them first. He inquired of the Prince whether they knew of tobacco, and upon being answered in the negative, he explained the material and texture of the cigar to Prince Harry, and then lighted it to exhibit the use of the weed. The Cardinal had been engaged in an animated conversation with his next neighbor on the left, an American brigadier, when suddenly he beheld this officer take a small stick from a box handed him by the waiter, and rub it on the edge of the box. To his amazement it burst into flame, emitting a sulphurous odor! Just then smelling smoke on his

right, he turned to General Vaughn, as the latter had taken the cigar from his mouth, and was in the act of blowing out a cloud of smoke. The horrified ecclesiastic sprang to his feet, seized his crucifix and held it in General Vaughn's face, shouting, "Avoid thee, Sathanas! My Lords, draw your swords and recite your credos! We are in the hands of the devil and his angels! But fear not; we will overpower these necromancers yet!" and he proceeded to lay violent hands upon General Vaughn.

The South English lords seized their swords and began quickly to rise from the table. For a moment affairs wore a threatening aspect; but the Americans sat coolly enough, and Prince Harry, who had seen the whole operation of lighting the cigar, shouted in thunderous tones: "Sit ye down, South English gentlemen! Unhand our noble host, your Eminence! See ye not that he shows us only yet another wonder? There be neither flames nor fire in his mouth, nor smoke, except that which he hath sucked in from the end of this little roll of dried herbs."

But the Cardinal was thoroughly affrighted. "My Lords!" he cried, "list ye that his Highness be bewitched to his own undoing? Heed him not, but save him from the foul fiend!"

"For shame, my Lord Cardinal!" roared the Prince. "Sit ye down and hear the gentleman speak! Have we only now for the first time seen some of the marvels of the outside world, to be scared like a covey of ptarmigan when they behold a sea-hawk? Have

ye forgot courage and courtesy all in one breath, that ye draw swords against a few naked men? Down, all, or, by our Lady of the Southern Cross, who forgets his duty and obedience to me drops his head, be he churchman or layman!"

These words brought the nobles to their senses and silenced the clergy, but they still continued to mutter their prayers and to gaze horror-struck upon the Americans. The Cardinal sank back breathless in his chair; for like Hamlet, he was fat and scant of breath as well as old, and the fearful excitement of the past few moments had quite exhausted him. General Vaughn arose and looked around upon the scowling faces of the guests.

"Your Highness and gentlemen," he said, "it is I who am to blame that I did not explain fully about these matters before bringing them before you, as it were, without notice. But the truth is, we are so used to all these customs that we never think of their being a surprise to those who have not been brought up in their practice. My Lord Cardinal, you undoubtedly know that sulphur is used in part in the making of gunpowder?"

"Verily I do," gasped the old gentleman, evidently much relieved, but still uneasy.

"Well, sir," rejoined the General, "there is another substance called phosphorus, which alone mixed in proper proportion with sulphur and put upon the end of these small sticks, will burst into flame upon being rubbed smartly upon hard objects. These

we call 'matches,' and this is now our means of obtaining fire. See!" and he lighted two or three matches. The churchmen and some of the knights yet crossed themselves, as they looked on in unmeasured wonder not devoid of dread; but the Prince took matches, examined them closely and lighted several, and gradually the guests grew ashamed of their panic and were absorbed in the interest with which they examined the strange things. The Cardinal finally became reassured, and proceeded to express his contrition to the General for his hasty conduct.

"I cry you pardon, my son," said he; "I see that the world holds more marvels yet than we, shut out from it as we are, bethink us of. I will haste not more to judge you, for I perceive you to be wondrous men."

Confidence being thus restored, but a few moments more were spent at table, and then the guests were invited to inspect the ship. As might be expected, the greatest wonder to them was the steam power. As simple and clear explanation as might be was given, and the machinery was put in motion, to their intense interest and gratification, not unmixed with awe and evidently some suspicions of necromancy. The great guns came next in their minds as marvellous, and the equipment and arms of the soldiers filled them with amazement. They could not conceive of an army entirely without defensive armor, "naked" as they called it, and were none the less surprised

who told that their armor was of no use as against the power of small-arms. The Prince asked for proof of this. He requested that one of his suite should be conveyed to the "Red Rose" to fetch a suit of his armor. This having been brought, and set up against the bulwarks, several shots were fired at it from rifles and revolvers. Every one penetrated the steel, to the intense surprise of all the South English. "Nathless, my Lord General," said the Prince, "these shots were fired full near. Even our arquebus balls will peradventure sometimes crack a breastplate. What hap should the armor be a bowshot abroad from your arquebusier?"

"I will in a few moments more satisfactorily show your Highness," replied the General; and he caused the armor to be taken to the most distant ship, a third of a mile away, and set up in a conspicuous place. Then calling for sharpshooters, he ordered three shots fired at it; after which signals were made by an officer of the signal corps on the other ship, that all the shots had struck the mark and two pierced it. Both the signalling itself and the result of the firing, as seen upon examination of the armor, excited great interest among the guests.

"By my halidom," exclaimed the Prince, "what think ye, my Lord of Cornwall? If we have seen so many strange things in a few short hours among these gentlemen, what hap if we bore them in company for a month? Beshrew me, but it would much pleasure our Lord the King, my royal father, that they

be commanded to visit his city of South London, to show him what manner of men they be."

"A most fair thought, and worthy of your Royal Highness," replied the Duke; "and I wot well that none among these gentle strangers but would be merry enow to be allowed to pay their duty to our glorious King, Henry the Ninth."

"Lay, then, our command upon this General," said the Prince, "that he sail his ships eftsoon to South England yonder, in company with our 'Red Rose of Lancaster' (for I will e'en end this cruise this day), and enter the South Thames, whence, by permission of the King, he may bring his ships to the city, there to pay his duty to our royal father."

But the American General now stepped forward with a mien quite different from that which he had worn hitherto.

"Your Royal Highness and my Lords," he said, "it is time that you fully understood our position in relation to yourselves, your King and nation. We have no more duty to show your King than he has to show us. The commanders of this armament will gratefully accept an invitation to visit your King and country, but you must well understand that no commands can be laid upon us excepting by our own ruler, the President of the Great Republic of the United States of America. It may sound strangely to you, but all American citizens are equal before the law, and our rulers are chosen from among ourselves. Yet, when a citizen is chosen to be our

chief ruler, he becomes the head of a mighty republic, such as no age of the world has ever before known. Neither I, nor any officer, or soldier, or seaman, on this fleet would be permitted to receive commands from any king, potentate, or power on earth. All communications made to me must be made with the full understanding that I represent here the government of the Republic.

"The principle of our national life is the Sovereignty of the People; and every man is free to exercise his rights and hold his own opinions in politics, in religion, and in general life, as long as he does not interfere with any other man's rights, and obeys the laws which are framed to that end. We are just now engaged in a terrible war for the crushing out of a rebellion against these ideas; and we are sure of success.

"But while our people are thus jealous of their position, and our government is as proud and high-spirited as any king on earth, we always aim at cultivating the friendliest and most respectful relations with all other nations; and if you kindly desire to invite us to visit your royal master and your country, we shall most happily accept the invitation. We are very proud to have been the discoverers of a great English power in this remote part of the earth; and believe me, when we report the existence of your land and people to the outside world, there will be a wonder and an interest excited second to none ever felt It will equal that aroused by the discovery of America by Columbus."

This speech of General Vaughn produced a singular effect. The haughty nobles at first appeared incensed at such bold language used to their Prince. The latter was apparently perfectly confounded at what he at first held to be unheard of audacity. It is doubtful if any one of the South English half comprehended the American's explanations, and all remained silent. Finally the Duke of Cornwall craved permission of the Prince to speak in reply, and said: —

"Our noble friend and most courteous and generous host must perforce pardon us for not understanding these strange things. His nation would seem to be made up of all princes and lords; certainly the bearing of himself and his officers is such as to make us fain to think thus. Yet the courtesy shown us by our noble hosts we should think shame not to return in our way; and his Royal Highness commands me therefore right joyfully to invite the General Vaughn to bring his fleet and army to his Majesty's city of South London, there to pay respects to our gracious master, Henry the Ninth, and to abide for such a space as seemeth fitting, before proceeding on his cruise."

"I thankfully accept your most kind and courteous invitation," replied the General, in behalf of myself and my command. I am compelled to say, however, that we shall be obliged to limit our stay to such time as may be required to the paying due honor to his Majesty the King, and for the necessary repairs

to our ships, which I shall pray his Majesty's permission to make at his city and harbor of South London. But by the imperative orders of my government I make all haste to continue our voyage to its termination. As fortunate as we have been in falling in with your land and people, we are very unfortunate in having been forced away from our course by terrible storms, which drove us into your ocean. Honor and duty demand that we be on our way as soon as may be after paying our respects to King Henry."

The General then invited the Prince and his suite to remain upon the American ship for the remainder of the voyage. The Prince was evidently greatly pleased, and accepted the invitation for himself and a part of his suite, but directed the rest to return to the "Red Rose." The American Commodore then suggested taking the South English ship in tow, but that did not suit the dignity of the Prince, and so the fleet got under way in the wake of the "Red Rose," which moved leisurely through the water at the rate of about five knots, the wind being fair and on the port quarter. The Prince ran about the ship like a boy, all excitement at everything he saw. He spent very much time in the engine room, and was completely fascinated by the play of the machinery.

As the afternoon wore away, however, he grew tired, and his entertainers not less so, and all were glad enough when he expressed a wish to go to the

cabin for rest. When all were seated, the American General asked if it would be agreeable to the guests to explain how a great English nation should be found in so remote a part of the world. The Prince remained silent from sheer fatigue, but the Duke of Cornwall remarked, —

"With his Highness's approval, our excellent friend the Abbot of Westminster will be blythe to expound to our noble hosts the history of our nation; for by 'r Lady, none in the land are wiser than he in black-letter lore."

The Abbot smiled in gratified pride, and bowing to the Prince and General Vaughn, entered upon his tale.

"The noble General and his train must know as well as we that the wars of the Roses closed in the year 1485, by the accession to the throne of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. Although this ended the fighting, — and England waxed weary enow of it, — yet was there grievous ill-content that this Henry, whose shield bore the bar sinister, should wield the sceptre of the Plantagenets in 'merry England;' and moreover, those who murmured were not only Yorkists, but many of the party of the Red Rose. A half of the old nobility had perished, either upon the stricken field or upon the scaffold. For all that, many were left, of both factions, living in exile in France, Austria, Burgundy, or elsewhere over seas. A woeful number of the noblest were in great penury, or existing only on the bounty of the rulers of those

lands; and some of those who could, made essay to return to England when peace came. But goodly store of these exiles, of both parties, drew together as best they might in France, abiding there in sullen discontent for well-nigh fifteen years after the peace. These being much exercised in mind by the many reports of successful voyages of the adventurers who followed Columbus, they vowed to band themselves together to seek those strange shores, where, please God, they might set up a new kingdom of England, and gain wealth and power, without bowing at the knee of Henry Tudor. Their plan was kept long secret, and they sent messages to such English exiles as yet remained in other lands, to persuade them to join them at Paris, where they were quietly making ready. They likewise sent to their friends in England itself, that they should make common cause with them.

"They adopted for a leader a certain bold soldier of fortune called Lord Harry Plantagenet. This nobleman was scarce known in England. He was, in truth, a prince of royal blood, being twin brother of Prince Edward, son of Henry the Sixth, and had been sent as a child by the King to Rome, to be educated for holy orders. At the age of fifteen he had escaped from his tutor, found a friend in a powerful Scottish lord, then on a mission at Rome, and in this lord's train repaired to Scotland, where he was trained to arms. After this he went again beyond seas, taking service in the army of Charles

the Bold, where he gained much fame; but having a slight put upon him by the Duke, he left his court and repaired to France, and offering his sword to Louis the Eleventh, told him frankly who he was. The King would fain take a liking to him, and he grew to great friendship with the natural son of Louis, the Count de Plessis. This youth had been a wild and disorderly young man, spending much of his previous life at the court of Naples, where his extravagance and debaucheries were so great as to cause him to be recalled by Louis to Paris, where, after a severe imprisonment of two years, he was compelled to live in strict retirement. But he was brave as well as dissolute, and eager to enter upon any adventure that would promise fame or fortune or both. As years went by Louis died, and was succeeded by Charles the Eighth, the Count's half brother. Meantime the Count had been fired by the accounts of discoveries in the New World, and with his friend Lord Harry Plantagenet schemed for years to obtain possession of ships, that they might sail over seas and find the fame, fortune, and dominion that they craved in the newly discovered lands. They interested the King in their projects, yet was he unwilling to give them ships or money until years had passed. At last he moved himself to help them to some end, for the English exiles had gathered from all parts, and they had been joined by many younger sons of families in England impoverished by the wars, and likewise by certain

adventurers. Also were there many French gentlemen who wished to join with them.

"About this time the Count de Plessis came into possession, from his mother's family, of large sums of gold; and this, added to the remainder of the mostly squandered wealth left him by his father, King Louis, made for enow to buy some ships. The King also gave him more; for strange stories of fabulous wealth to be got for the mere taking, in lands said to be south of those seized of the Spaniards, had of late reached him.

"Likewise had the Lord Plantagenet and his English friends been helped to money and several large ships by some London merchants, who wished to share in the expected profits of the adventure.

"The intended expedition had been held secret from all eyes, from fear of Spanish interference, and at last the ships sailed from different ports, lest too much note be made of them. They met off the Azores, and much they marvelled at being joined there by five more English vessels, having on board about seven hundred adventurers. The company did not go as conquerors alone, but as colonists; and many families went entire, — among them goodly store of ladies of quality who were wives and daughters of the barons, as well as other women. The whole of them that went were about three thousand souls. They sailed southward, keeping near the African coast, hoping to cross the broad ocean at a part said to be much narrower than where Columbus and the

Cabots sailed. Indeed, they landed more than once on the African soil, to obtain water, and fresh meat by hunting, and many were their adventures with wild beasts and savage tribes in those days. At length the winds, which had been strong, grew boisterous from the north, yet not perilously so, and the ships sailed on, still southwardly, until, after having been blown before them for weeks, they found themselves in this Warm Current into whose power you have fallen. After many days of dark and woeful drifting among ice, during which awful time one ship was lost and others sadly crushed, they came to a land which we call Iceland, far north of these parts, where they landed, praising the saints for their deliverance. They found plenty of game and fish there, and rested for a brief space. Then hearing from the natives of that country that there was land farther south, they sailed on and found this island, which, seeming somewhat like unto England, they named it South England, and took possession thereof. Now this was in the springtime when they landed, although 't were autumn at their old home; and the summer was upon them anon, blythely for them, for they knew not as yet the dark winter of this clime.

"Nor did they find the land untenanted; for here dwelt a pale people, whom the holy and learned monks who came with the adventurers found descended from both Greek and Asiatic stock, and whose ancestors had migrated to South Africa and

thence to these shores, mayhap five hundred years before. They were likewise Christians, after a rude fashion, and had monasteries and churches. These folk warred among themselves (for they were broken into petty kingdoms), and the king of that country where our fathers came to shore besought them sore to yield help against his foe, the king of that land which is now the county of South Devon. Lord Harry and the Count led their little array in alliance with this king's army against his enemy, and completely defeated them in three fierce encounters, conquering that kingdom for their ally, who waxed old and feeble, his only heir being a young girl. This princess was given the Lord Harry Plantagenet to wife, and on the death of the old king he ascended the throne. He soon attacked in turn all the other princes of the island, and subjected the whole to his sway. Thus was he a second William the Conqueror. He re-named the cities, and indeed nearly all the land, — rivers, seas, and mountains, — calling them after those of the dear old England, which in many ways is this island like unto. Yet were some of the original names retained.

"Eftsoon his friend the Count de Plessis, with the French nobles and men-at-arms, crossed the narrow seas, which be marvellous like to the Strait of Dover, and, aided by English knights, conquered the country there, in which dwelt the same manner of folk as inhabited South England. The Count and his French called it 'La Nouvelle France,' and built

castles and seized cities in like fashion as had been done by the English here. Both the Count, who now became King Louis the First, and Henry the First of South England, treated the conquered peoples with gentleness and wisdom, establishing trade, manufactures, mining, and agriculture, in ways heretofore unknown among them. Since then these peoples have increased and prospered in wondrous manner, and have become as English here and French there as in the old countries, I wot.

"Since those days the history of these countries hath been less varied, belike, than that of the lands of Europe. The Plantagenets still rule here, glory to the saints! and the descendant of Louis the First, whilom Count de Plessis, beareth sway in La Nouvelle France. Wars have raged betwixt the two nations, and voyages of discovery have been made, in hope of finding a passage to the Old World whence we came. But everywhere we find, in sailing many hundred miles east, west, north, and south, the belt of frozen countries or of eternal ice. None have, moreover, ever till now reached us from beyond that ice.

"As to our ways of life, we were forced from the beginning to bear as best we might the long winter with its weeks without the sun. The summer is short and warm, the springtime and autumn shorter. The night of winter is not, nathless, dark with the gloom of your night-time. The *aurora noctis* here is wondrous shining, and in no writings of the

ancients have I seen, no, nor in any of the books brought from England, printed by Caxton, neither beheld I ever, any mention of such brightness. The winter hath not great coldness, and there be few snows, but many rains. The Warm Current which sweeps about the greater part of South England floweth to the northwest, after leaving our shores, and giveth us a gentle climate, full different from that of lands to north and south of us. Our summers be warm long time enow to ripen grains, the vine, and some fruits, as best the apple. But we know not of many products such as we read of, described by writers of past time who have seen such things.

"Heaven hath vouchsafed us mines of gold, silver, copper, iron, coal-stone, as well as sulphur, salt, and other commodities, and our folk dig great store of these from the earth. Much we use ourselves, and much we sell to the French, whose mines are far distant, in the mountains to southward, across the branch of the Warm Current, which maketh around the south of their country. Some of these mountains are volcanoes, and there their land is hot indeed in summer; and from thence come diamonds and all manner of precious stones.

"Such, noble hosts, is our kingdom, and thus came our ancestors to it. We love it well; but among our churchmen, more than amid laymen, be there many who have made great study of the annals of past ages, and we know, as do you, the history of

the ancients, and that of Europe to near the year of grace 1500, — yea, and of England, the home of our fathers, which we trust still to be in her glory.

"But you who come from the realms where there is day and night ever, and whose mighty nation was yet unborn when our fathers sailed down the seas, we pray you to tarry long enow with us to tell of the world and its present wonders. And when you go, may all the saints speed you, and either bring you again here, or send others who can and will come, having learned from you who and what we are who abide here, that we may open friendship and knowledge with the world outside; for the great steam-driven ships such as you sail in against wind and tide can brave and overcome all difficulties, which to us are a hopeless barrier to dealings with our fellow-men elsewhere. For we weary of being shut out from the world beyond, and would fain be of it, as well as a remote part of it, unbeknown as we are of all men. Pax vobiscum!"

And the Abbot had finished his tale.

By this time it was well into the night by the hour, but still the sun was high. The company adjourned to the deck, to find the ships rolling on a gentle swell and close on the coast. Wooded cliffs stretched away on every hand, and directly ahead was the mouth of a river. The "Red Rose" was nearly a mile in advance, with all sail set. The deciduous trees were not yet in full leaf, but evergreens abounded. On a rocky height on the starboard bow was a

mediæval castle with a royal standard displayed. The American ships had slowed up so as barely to keep steerage way, and were heaving the lead constantly. At last the "Red Rose" was hove to, and waited for the fleet to come up. The flagship ran alongside of her, and an officer was sent aboard to ask for a pilot. The captain at first did not understand what was wanted; finally, however, comprehending, he said that there was water enough in mid channel quite up to the city, six miles inland.

As the Prince preferred to remain on the steamer, the American captain sent to the South English ship for a royal standard to display at masthead.

This being set, the "Red Rose" immediately began a salute, and was answered by cannon from the castle, and the American fleet immediately opened fire in reply. As they drew nearer, the castle walls were seen to be crowded with men, and the shores were also lined with people, gazing with awe at the unwonted sight. Various small vessels, probably coasters or fishermen, were sailing into or out of the river, but they were observed to give the strange ships a wide berth.

The American ships cautiously felt their way up the channel of the river, which was about a mile wide at its mouth, and at last, after passing round a bend, the city broke upon their view some miles distant. Villages of squalid huts were here and there scattered along the banks, with now and then a tower or castle on some commanding point.

People everywhere were rushing to the shores, and bodies of horsemen could be descried hurrying toward the city from different directions.

At last they turned another bend and were opposite the town, which was built upon both banks, with bridges across at intervals. Small vessels, evidently fishing craft, interspersed with some larger ones, and nearer the city about a dozen men-of-war, lay at anchor, or at pier.

At this point many pages of the journal of Captain Percy are almost entirely illegible, having evidently been soaked in water. Enough can be deciphered to indicate that the American fleet was received with great ceremony and most profound wonder. The city was found to be composed of many palaces and castles, surrounded with low houses, in narrow crooked streets, and hundreds of squalid huts. The streets were hardly passable in some places, unpaved, and extremely filthy. The people exhibited every indication of being yet in the condition of the Middle Ages. Nobles and knights rode about followed by their trains; stout burghers and their families walked along, picking their way as best they might; and crowds of dirty vagrants and beggars abounded. Here and there wretches skulked through the mud, who wore chains, and exhibited every mark of degradation. They were evidently slaves.

The Americans were struck by the extreme paleness of the people. The ship's company of the "Red Rose" had been at sea and were sunburned,

but on shore all were so very white. The explanation given them was that the great mass of the population ashore had not yet got back their color, lost during the absence of the sun in the dark months of winter. In a few weeks they would be ruddy enough.

It had proved after careful examination that it was imperatively necessary that the flagship should be discharged of her cargo, which consisted of the artillery and a large part of the ammunition of the army, so that she could be hauled up where her bottom might receive indispensable repairs. This had been explained to the King at the first audience held by the American General, in which he had begged the privilege of being allowed to land his troops and to establish a camp, for the time that it might be necessary to remain in South England. In granting cordially this request, the King had invited him to select his own ground, and even offered the use of a castle for his convenience. But General Vaughn with many thanks declined this kind offer, for both public and private reasons. The public one was that he felt it imperative to remain with his army for the sake of discipline and the possible safety of all concerned; and the private reason was principally that the sanitary condition of every palace and castle which he had visited in the few first days of his stay in the country had seemed intolerable to a man of the nineteenth century. Luxury and squalor walked hand in hand.

Foulness, vermin, and bad odors were only relieved by a free admission of fresh air. The floors were, apparently, seldom if ever swept. Dogs were innumerable, and uncleanness was poorly concealed by rushes thickly scattered about. Furniture, except in the apartments devoted to lords and ladies, was very primitive and coarse. It was quite singular to note the surprise and admiration which King and court manifested when they visited the fleet, and observed the plain and light furniture, and the accommodations of the ships' cabins, which in convenience and comfort were a revelation to them.

Before landing the General had caused most strict orders to be promulgated in regard to the bearing and discipline to be maintained while ashore, fully explaining the vital necessity of observing the utmost care in all communications and dealings with the inhabitants. He reminded his officers and soldiers that the army were guests of generous hosts, but of an unknown people, in an entirely different state of civilization from their own. Any misbehavior was to be punished by confinement on board of one of the ships until the day of sailing. In the sequel it proved that such was the character of the troops comprising the force, that only seven men were confined during their stay. The Commodore also issued similar orders to the crews of the ships.

It soon became manifest that the government of this King was an absolute despotism, corresponding nearly with that of Henry the Eighth. There seemed

to be no disturbing questions on the score of religion; the King was the head of Church and State. But that political difficulties were not unknown, was easily to be apprehended from the fact that on both "Tower Hill" and the "London bridges" over the river, not a few heads were to be seen of unfortunate victims of the block. As it was the especial privilege of noble blood to be ushered into the next world through the instrumentality of the headsman, whenever the King's impression was that certain of the barons or knights would best become this life by leaving it (while the vulgar were hustled off on the gallows, or possibly, in aggravated cases, by means of immersion in boiling oil), it followed that each one of these blackened heads represented some Lord This, or the Earl or Marquis of That, or even perhaps Lady Somebody; and one head was pointed out to General Vaughn as having originally pertained to a certain Bishop of Rockminster, who had undertaken to explain to his Majesty that the Golden Rule, to be reasonably operative, must be practised by the highest as well as by the lowest. To his reasoning, which to us of the nineteenth century would not appear utterly illogical, the King had replied: "My Lord Bishop, thy tongue droppeth rare wisdom. Perhaps in a higher position it might teach thy brethren yet greater sagacity." And the last *prie-dieu* on which the poor ecclesiastic knelt was the sawdust before the block, his head and tongue in it, appearing subsequently in the "higher position."

But in Rome one should conform to Roman customs; and when the General found that a party of soldiers, on a day's furlough, had interfered to save the life of an old man who, having been set in the stocks, was being stoned to death by the playful mob, and had rescued a young girl with a babe in her arms who was about to be hung as a witch, he thought it expedient to establish his camp at a suitable spot some five miles below the city, on the river, and to issue strict orders forbidding any soldier to go into any city or village. This had appeared to him the more prudent thing to do, as the King had invited him to an audience, and explained that, upon any repetition of such interference with the lawful and commendable habits of his people or law officers by the soldiery, he should expect the offender to be delivered up to his hangman to be boiled in oil. Hence the General had preferred to remove his troops from a neighborhood where they would be exposed to the temptation of practising philanthropy disapproved by their entertainers. The camp was pitched on a high bluff near the place where the ships lay at anchor, there being no building near save a royal castle which stood on a crag about a quarter of a mile east of the position.

The General, finding that the voyage could not be soon resumed, bought horses enough for the use of the cavalry and artillery, which his quartermaster-general bargained for on condition that the King's treasurer would take them off his hands, by the time

the expedition was ready to put to sea again, at a price considerably below what was paid for them. This was necessary, in order to keep the troops in good drill and discipline, and General Vaughn thought it prudent for other reasons, which he kept to himself. The sequel eventually proved the wisdom of his course.

It is greatly to be regretted that the pages of Captain Percy's journal, which had been water-soaked, and which, up to this point, could with great difficulty be deciphered, here become entirely illegible, and continue so for a considerable space. The next succeeding portion of it which can be read, and indeed the whole of the remainder, relates to his personal adventures, and it all reads like a romance. It is given almost entirely in his own language, and it will be observed that he invariably speaks of himself, his impressions, and everything concerning his experience, as if he were writing of another person.

CHAPTER III.

A JOURNEY INTO FAIR NORTHUMBRIA.

For we follow the Percy, whose proud northern land
Ne'er saw the fell gleam of a foeman's bright brand, —
Ne'er felt the dread weight of a King's vengeful hand.
In our sharp swords we trust,
And our lances ne'er rust,
When we march to the fray from fair North-Humber-Land.

Old Northumbrian War Song.

THE Americans had been in camp for two weeks, drilling and training, and exercising their new horses, when, late one afternoon, Lord Percy rode into their lines, followed by a squire and a score or so of well-appointed and well-mounted men-at-arms and archers. He stopped at Captain Percy's quarters and dismounted, entering the young man's tent with little ceremony.

"Good-morrow, my noble kinsman," he said, as the Captain came forward; "his Royal Highness hath been graciously pleased to accord me the boon of absence from his august presence for a month and a day. I pray you to obtain the same leave from your most honorable General, that you may ride with me to visit my father, the Earl, at his castle of Ravensclyffe-on-the-Sea, whence he hath scarce issued these

three years, having a grievous malady which preventeth his stirring much abroad. And I would counsel your taking with you a score or two of men-at-arms; for, together with my train, it shall surely hap that we have the good fortune to fall in with a body of the outlaws which infest the Great Norman Way, through the White Forest of Humber, where these villains swarm, and we would fain flesh our swords rarely on their carcasses. And when we are away from this place a few bowshots, you may hear from me that at which you shall wondrously marvel. But haste, my friend, to accomplish this, for I have already prayed Major Bruce, your medical director, to be of the party, who hath joyously agreed to honor us with his company. 'Tis meet that we make ready to mount and ride, for we should start betimes, lest his Highness should change his most fickle mind and forbid my departure. He loves me not."

Percy was delighted at the prospect of a trip across the country, and the opportunity of visiting the feudal castle of one of the great barons of the North so renowned as the Earl of Northumberland was held to be. He easily obtained leave for the time proposed, as it was clear that the repairs on the flagship would consume more than a month. A troop of cavalry was ordered to accompany them, and by sunset, which was then about nine o'clock, they set out. The Americans wondered at the high rate of speed which their friend maintained, for at least ten miles; and even late into the night, they scarcely drew rein. The

aurora was so brilliant that it was like travelling by a full moon. About midnight Lord Percy led the little column off the highway, and by a forest road proceeded more slowly and quietly for about three miles. Suddenly they emerged from the wood and found themselves near the bank of a river, and upon high land. At the summit of this crest, on a little rocky promontory stretching out into the stream, was a partially ruined tower. Here the Baron halted, and informed his companions that it would be the best place in which to spend the night. He called his squire, and Percy observed that he gave very strict orders about the watch to be kept up, and also recommended to his friend to instruct the commanding officer of the American troop to maintain careful guard. The whole party entered the courtyard, and the gate of the castle was carefully dragged across the entrance, having been too nearly demolished to be regularly closed. The drawbridge could not be raised, being so badly broken, and the portcullis was shattered. When all had been secured as strongly as possible, and the horses of the party picketed in the ruinous stables, fires were lighted in the courtyard for the men. The officers accompanied the Baron into the old hall, where a fire was burning, and where they were to eat before sleeping. The meal finished, Lord Percy led his friends into an inner apartment, dimly lighted by torches, where some rude couches were disposed.

"I lament much, my noble guests," said he, "that

I may not have more blythe bower to offer you for to-night; but this place at least is safe, and methinks nothing will break our slumbers until we list."

"I am surprised at your hint as to safety, and would ask its meaning," replied Captain Percy.

"Prithee wait, and bear me patience until the morrow," rejoined the Baron; "and when the wind blows colder betwixt us and that accursed court, I will unfold that which shall be esteemed by you passing strange."

Percy was astonished at this, but at the moment his Lordship's squire, Lumley, entered the apartment, and proceeded to unlace the armor of his master. Soon afterwards the three gentlemen, wrapped in their blankets, lay down on the couches, and were shortly, like old campaigners, asleep. But their slumbers were of short duration. A half-hour had passed, when the Captain was aroused by a rushing and scampering about him, and springing to his feet he saw by the bright aurora which streamed in the heavens and cast a misty glare through the small window, an army of rats, — which foul creatures squealed and fled from his movements. Just then the Baron also sprang up, although the Doctor slept on.

"A murrain upon the accursed vermin!" he growled. "They are plenty as outlaws in Humber Forest. I would the fiend whose enchanted sons they are would transport them all to the palace of the King!"

"With all my heart," replied the Captain, laughing,

"so they did n't pine for country air and seek our camp. But what is that?" A horn was blown twice outside the walls.

"Surely, what may it be?" muttered the Baron; and seizing his sword, he strode out into the main hall. He was met by several men-at-arms, bearing torches and escorting a stout, short man of dark complexion and fiery eyes, who was bespattered with mud from head to foot, and who staggered with fatigue as he approached.

"How, Eric!" exclaimed the Baron, in surprise, and then added, to Percy, who had followed him out, "'T is Eric Danbold, seneschal of my father's castle of Ravensclyffe."

"Yes, my Lord, it is even I," replied the man, in an exhausted voice.

"But what make you here now, and in this plight?" asked Lord Reginald.

"Alas, my Lord," said the man, "I bring you heavy tidings. Your cousin, Lord George Dorset, was seized by the King's guards this morning at his sister's castle of Kent, and hurried to South London, where he arrived just after you rode out of the American camp. He was dragged before the King. I know not what passed there, but 't is said King Henry swore he should ne'er see sunset more. I saw him haled to Tower Hill, where his noble head fell in less than an hour after he set foot in the palace."

"Oh, accursed tyrant! Oh, bloody fiend!" cried

Lord Reginald. "Oh, George! my friend, my brother-in-arms, my noble kinsman! Was there no voice raised for him?"

"No man dared breathe, my Lord. Arrests were made of Sir Thomas Mordaunt, his Lordship of Essex, Lord Zylmorolah, and Master Latimer the Speaker of the House. All were hurried to the Tower, closely guarded. They were in search of you, too, and seized all your servants, beating the town for you. The Prince was at Windsor, and Effingham, your steward, told them that you were with him, in attendance upon his Highness. That I was in the city was unknown, else had I been now in deep dungeon."

"And when came you to the city?" asked the Baron.

"I had but arrived after you rode away, yestreen, to Windsor, and was fain, after all seen and heard, to steal to your stables, saddle Wild Heron, and escape to the American camp. Finding that you had been there and had gone northward, I rode for my life after you. Mine host of the Dragon at the village of Tarnsuallos, back a league, told me that you lay this night at the Wolf's Lair, and so here am I. But ride, my Lord, ride! 'T were right perilous to return to the Norman Way. Luckily, I know all the by-paths through forest and moor, and we can reach the hills before pursuers can cross the Avon. But pardon, my Lord, I am fearfully spent," and the faithful fellow sank down as he spoke.

"Here! Norval, William! Unbelt him! Bring cordials! Rub him stoutly! Lumley, see that Wild Heron has best of care; and look to it that my retinue be ready to ride. How in the fiend's name, Eric, knew the host of the Dragon that we lay at Wolf's Lair?"

"Alas! I know not, my Lord," replied the man; "but set forward, my young master. Care not for me. I can yet sit a horse; and if not, I reck not, since I save you."

"How, varlet! Didst e'er know a Percy to desert a friend in peril, however humble?"

"Never, my Lord. 'T is for that and much else that your vassals ever love the Percy."

"Then rest now for a brief space, Eric, and as soon as may be, we set forward. But now, by my halidom, here are my friends and their following. How now, gentlemen, an hour since and ye were the guests of the Prince's Master of the Horse, Reginald Percy, son and heir of the Earl of Northumberland. Now you are companions of a proscribed man, about to fly for his life. A blythe measure have I brought you to dance!"

The Doctor, who had joined them, and was looking out of a window, exclaimed, —

"My Lord, there is a column of cavalry coming down the slope of that road on the further river bank. There! they emerge from the shadow of the wood. There must be two hundred of them."

"Ay, thou 'rt right. They come to essay the

ford, a good mile above. Nathless, 't were a full hour ere they may labor through the deep and rocky crossing and array themselves before the tower. To horse, gentlemen! You can go back by the road we came, until you reach the Norman Way. Then turn east and ride for the city with all speed. None will dare molest the guests of the King; and if they did I warrant ye would give good account of yourselves. But 't is not meet ye suffer peril through our feuds. Haste, good haste, friends, before they cross the ford."

But the young American smiled haughtily. "Didst ever know a Percy to desert a friend in peril?" he asked, quoting the Baron's own words. "And Dr. Bruce was born without fear, I verily believe, from what I have seen of him in danger. We started to pay our respects to the noble Earl your father, and are men not easily beaten off a trail. Doctor, I think we will ride with his Lordship."

"I propose to, myself," replied the Doctor, dryly, "and should be very loath to lose your companionship, Arthur."

"Well, my noble friends, if such be your will, I shall not gainsay it. And, sooth to tell, I love your company. So to horse speedily, and we set out to baffle these knaves."

The little column was soon on the march, the Americans in front, as Lord Percy insisted upon bringing up the rear with his men-at-arms, swearing that the guests should not be nearest the foe.

The escort was composed of a troop of Massachusetts cavalry, some forty strong, commanded by Captain Pelham, a youth of nineteen, who had seen hard service in Virginia, having been severely wounded at Aldie. His lieutenants were fine young men, of considerable experience in the war. The non-commissioned officers and men were all veteran soldiers. Their regiment was armed with repeating carbines. Percy was surprised, as they moved down the flinty road leading from the tower, to observe that their march was almost noiseless, and upon inquiry found that the horses' feet had been wrapped in wool, and the sabres were strapped to the saddles, under the girths, in a manner well known to the cavalry of the army, the custom having been adopted in the woody country of the South, where there was necessarily much fighting on foot.

Upon reaching the foot of the hill, they turned west, and followed a rough road bordering the river. After a march of five miles, they turned sharply off into a blind forest path, where they could move only two abreast. The seneschal Danbold acted as guide, and having led them into the dense obscurity of the wood for about a quarter of a mile, he brought them out into an open glade on high land, having a morass on either side and a very steep ascent in front. Requesting Captain Pelham to halt his troop at the summit of this hill, he rode back to the Baron.

"My Lord," he said, "you know me a good woodsman, and well trained to note all sights and sounds

in the forest. I have heard, for a mile back, the trampling of a steed, ever drawing nearer. I am fain to believe it to be no other than little Robert Lester, the Earl's page, who was sent with me a sennight since, by his Lordship, to bear a message to you, had you returned from your voyage. Ere I left the city I bid Lester, who is unknown there, to watch for the departure of any party sent after you, and to ascertain the direction of their march; then, by cross roads, to get in front of them and overtake you as soon as might be. He knows the forest ways well, having been with me in wood and moor many a day; and now, by your leave, I will ride back to the high road, and in safe cover will await the coming of this rider, who I believe may be he."

"You say well," replied the Baron, "but you go not alone; I will bear company."

"And so will I," said Captain Percy, who had joined them.

They accordingly returned to the road, concealing themselves among the thick growth of evergreens, to await the coming rider, who had checked his horse and was approaching at a walk. As he neared their position he pulled up altogether.

"Now a murrain on this unhallowed wood!" he muttered. "The trees are so grown that a fox could find no way."

"Robert," called the seneschal.

"Holy Saint Agnes assoilzie me!" shrieked the boy, crossing himself; "'t is the river Nixie!" And

he gathered his horse for flight. The Baron dashed out upon him.

"Cease thy brawling, brat," said he, "and tell what tidings ye bring!"

"Blessed be Saint Agnes of the Spring, if 't is in sooth thou, my Lord," cried the boy. "I come direct from the Wolf's Lair, where the Sheriff of Kent, with Sir James de Wyvil and tenscore of the King's archers are searching for you. I had followed them from the city, but they turned aside to Effingham and I kept the Norman Way. They forded the river at St. Joseph's Well, and I had spurred around them so as to reach the tower first. I hid my horse in the wood and crept up under the drawbridge. When they came they found fires in the courtyard, but the birds flown. I was blythe to hear Sir James say to the sheriff that there was no hope of catching you now, unless they might come up with you ere reaching the White Forest of Humber, beyond which their array was not strong enow to pursue, as they were like to meet the forest bands."

Even as they spoke there was borne on the night wind the clash and rattle of a body of horsemen approaching at high speed. They withdrew into the shadows of the forest, and within five minutes there came riding by at a gallop a force which might have been estimated at two hundred men-at-arms. The aurora shone on the nodding plumes of two knights at their head, and flashed on the armor of the whole party. Many of the horses were "blowing" painfully,

and there was great irregularity in their march, a number of riders straggling behind the column. Everything indicated fatigue and distress on the part of the horses, and in fact they soon came to a halt on the brow of an eminence not far away, to restore order in their ranks; after which they moved on more slowly in the same direction.

"Now Heaven be praised!" muttered the seneschal. "They are well on their way to Darbos, whither they believe your Lordship to have gone. It is a good score of miles through the forest, with ne'er a peasant's hut within two leagues of this spot. We may march at our ease, after a brace of hours' good rest, and put thirty fair miles betwixt their wearied steeds and ours before noon to-morrow. Nay, an 't please your Lordship, we can cross the mountain and draw rein for food and rest by the lake beyond the pass. I know every rood of the forest path."

"Let it be so, good Eric," replied the Baron. "I were fain we be fresh ere we enter the White Forest of Humber. We are like to meet warm welcome from the varlet outlaws there."

"I have reason to think that scarce likely, my Lord," replied the man, "but I will haste to guide the Americans to the other side of the glade."

"That seems a faithful and worthy fellow," remarked Captain Percy.

"None live that be more so," replied Lord Reginald. "Such as he is, hath he been, boy and man, for thirty years, to the Percy."

After crossing the glade, the blind forest path began to tend upward, and from the increased sharpness of the air Captain Percy would have known that they were ascending a height, although the ascent seemed gradual. Suddenly they emerged from the wood and found themselves on a plateau, by the side of a little lake, which mirrored exquisitely the flashing aurora. This wonderful light increased to almost a glare of dancing waves and streamers, rapidly chasing each other northward, and playing fitfully about the head of a majestic mountain peak in front and to the north, set in midnight gloom against the electric brilliancy of the sky, save where masses of snow near its summit reflected the shining aurora. The light had been white up to this time, but now there began to shoot up from the southern horizon to the zenith streaks of pink and apple green. These grew more and more intense in color, until at length they merged into a blood-red line of shooting lances of light. Gradually these spread into broad sheets of brilliancy, until they blended together, and the final result was an entire sky of red flame, from horizon to zenith, on every side.

The American column instinctively halted in silent awe. Not a word was spoken for some time. Then exclamations of wonder and excited admiration broke from all.

"My Lord," cried Percy, "is this superb scene a familiar one to you, or is it as wonderful as it is to us?"

"'T is gorgeous, by my faith," replied his com-

panion, "and right glad am I that it cometh at this hour to greet you thus; but 't is not rare to see such at yule-tide season, although 't is not common in springtime. But, kinsman, have you not the 'Aurora of Night' in your land?"

"We call it 'Northern Lights,'" replied Percy. "I have seen it very beautiful, but never approaching such as this."

"I have seen it once or twice in Sweden like this," remarked the Doctor.

The aurora continued while they were winding through the narrow pass, which was enclosed by rocky walls of imposing perpendicular height. As they emerged, the dawn was reddening the east, and the "Aurora of Night" faded.

At daybreak they bivouacked by the side of a lake, high upon the northern slope of the mountain. The place was a little meadow, where there was abundant forage for the horses. The scenery was extremely grand, and the locality itself a beautiful opening in the forest. After caring for the animals, and eating breakfast, the tired riders wrapped themselves in blankets and slept for two hours. Awakening refreshed, they resumed the march down the mountain, and reached a moor at its foot an hour before noon. A wood bordered this plain at its northern extremity, at a distance of about five miles, and the Baron remarked, "Yonder lies the White Forest of Humber, through which we pass, and sure am I we meet there the outlaws."

Just before reaching the forest, which the Doctor perceived derived its distinctive name from the fact of its being made up entirely of a species of very large and tall white birch, it was necessary to pass through a wild and rocky glen, having precipitous sides, apparently impassable to man or beast. Suddenly the head of the column came to a halt, and Lord Reginald and Percy rode forward to learn the meaning of this delay, the Doctor meanwhile dismounting to examine the geological character of the rocks. They found the seneschal, Eric Danbold, a few yards in front of the advance guard, in conversation with a man who will need particular description.

He was short, very stout and muscular, with extremely long, powerful arms. His hair and beard were reddish, his eyes gray, his complexion light. His face had an expression of mingled boldness and cunning, and the restless eye wandered everywhere with quick sharp glances, especially penetrating when he looked at the arms of the Americans. He wore upon his head a fur bonnet, with a plume of hawk's feathers; and his body garment was a woollen jacket having short skirts reaching half-way to the knees, which were bare like those of a Scotch Highlander. His feet were covered by a sort of skin or fur shoe, with strips of the same material wound about the legs to the knees. A kind of blanket or cloak was rolled, like the blankets of our infantry in "light marching order," — that is, across the shoulder in a roll, and tied together at the ends at the opposite

hip. A fur bag, or haversack, was thrown over the other shoulder, at which was likewise slung a long bow and quiver. He carried in his hand a slender but heavy partisan, or axe, which from time to time he flourished, until the air whistled about him. This was apparently done unconsciously. The language of this person was intelligible only to Lord Reginald and Eric Danbold. Percy, however, detected some English words.

After some minutes' conversation the stranger, turning about with no ceremony, strode toward the further entrance to the glen, near the forest.

"Now by my faith, kinsman!" ejaculated the Baron, "rarely ere this have I met a mountaineer except point to point. Yon man is a henchman of his chief, the celebrated Ruval Ben-Ardlac, the Robin Hood of these days. And the White Forest of Humber is this Hood's Sherwood Forest. This henchman is sent to beg a friendly meeting betwixt the Percy and Ben-Ardlac, who have hitherto met only in battle. Amazed am I, and naught can I bethink me of what it portendeth."

His words were interrupted by the long and shrill blast of a horn, and from out the greenwood there advanced a singular group. At the head was a man of gigantic stature, with a broad, full, and handsome face of fair complexion, blue eyes, and sandy hair and beard. He was clad and armed much like the tribesman whose appearance has been described, but his coat or jacket was of a green color, lined and

bordered by fur of the sea-otter. He wore a heavy, rudely made gold chain about his neck, from which depended a horn and a silver whistle. His bonnet was decorated with eagle's feathers. Upon his thigh was a long heavy sword.

The six men with him were evidently his tribesmen, and closely resembled the henchman who had first appeared, in dress and arms.

The expression of the chief was frank, and even jocular. His attendants stopped at ten yards' distance, and he advanced alone, taking off his bonnet and bowing gracefully as he approached; which courtesy was duly returned, both gentlemen dismounting and stepping forward to meet him.

"I deem it great honor," said he, in good English, "to meet in peace and good-will the noble Lord Percy, whose martial form I have so often seen in battle when opposed to me." The American was astonished to hear him continue, "And I hail in like honor his friend, the gallant gentleman from beyond the great waters. You will pass in quiet and safety through our forest lands, not only unmolested, but with a thousand swords of my people drawn to cover your rear from your pursuers, my Lord. The tyrant who hath shed, unprovoked, the blood of your kinsman, is our lifelong foe. He seeks your own head; but we of the northern mountains and forests, who have fought the Percies of Northumberland for generations, will now sway sword and draw bow by your side. Our foe is common to us both, and the time

has come for the tribesmen of forest and mountain to make lasting peace with the Percy."

The American was yet more astonished at Lord Reginald's reply. "My Lord Dacre," he said to the stranger, "I take your hand with honor to myself in the act, since it is the hand of a gallant gentleman and noble lord, although he be driven from his castles and estate, and left now but chieftain of a mountain clan. And this I will say and maintain against any who dare say nay, on foot or on horseback, with lance, sword, or battle-axe, although ye are a rebel these many years, and I, with my father the Earl and all our family and vassals, are yet loyal in our fealty to his Majesty the King Henry the Ninth. Nathless I know not, that being so, why the King hath struck off my kinsman's head, nor why I, with free leave from his Royal Highness to visit my father's castle, taking my guests from over seas with me, should be hunted like a wolf by the High Sheriff of Kent, with great following, and forced to fly with my friends over mountains and through forests. Verily, 't is sorry news to bear to the Earl."

"And hast not heard, then," rejoined the chieftain, eagerly and with surprise, "that the lords of the West, making common cause with the mountain clans of the Ormondes and Ben-Aldolays, have taken the King's castle of Carnarvon, and defeated the Earl of Anglesea in a pitched battle, in which the Earl himself, and nearly all his knights, have fallen, and that the King himself in his rage, being informed (whether

truly or no, I know not, — 't is for you, my Lord, to know that), that the noble Earl of Northumberland was hand in glove with the rebels, hath sworn to harry with fire and steel all the country north of the Humber, and to root out our mountain and forest tribes, if it takes a war long as his span of life? But I see by your look of wonder, my Lord, that these tidings are indeed news to you. Ah, believe me, 't was not for naught you were kept at Windsor, and then allowed to go North with a light following. 'T was meant you should ne'er reach the Wolf's Lair, my Lord, — you start! Believe me, I know from day to day what passes at the court. I have willing eyes and ears there. The patience of more than one great noble is spent by the growing tyranny, and — but I say too much; and I keep you, while you should be hasting to Northumbria. Farewell, then, Lord Percy, and know that your rear is secure. I fain hope that we may soon stand side by side in battle against Henry Plantagenet."

With a courteous wave of the hand the chieftain stepped behind a rock, and, although Lord Reginald started forward to call him back for more words, both he and his attendants had vanished in the singular labyrinth of immense bowlders and gorges which covered and scarred the steep ascent at the sides of the glen.

"Now, by my halidom, but that is news indeed," muttered the Baron.

"Who is that strange man?" asked Percy.

"You may well ask," rejoined his companion. "He was erst the noble Lord Dacre of Tisdale. His father, the Earl of Monashorah, was beheaded a score of years gone, for joining in a rising in the West, and his sister, the Countess of Salisbury, died in a dungeon in Strothsay Isle, for harboring her cousin, Sir George Chester, who was flying from the King's vengeance. The Earl's estates were all forfeited to the Crown, and his family driven into exile. The Earl was hereditary chief of the Ben-Ardlac tribe of mountaineers, and his son, this Lord Dacre, fled with his mother and surviving sister to the fastnesses of the hills, where the King's troops never could follow them. The clan has never since ceased to war upon the low country, and I have often, as did my father before me, met them in battle with varying fortune. That such a man should be driven to such a fate! But I fear me his tale is too true. Alas, if my father hath been o'er hasty in espousing the cause of these barons of the West, who are in revolt, I much dread the issue; for we are but ill-prepared, and the plot must have been prematurely unveiled.

"Yet it will take the King some weeks to muster his whole array; but Sussex is a good soldier and hath had great conduct in the wars, — the storm may yet be averted. The mountain clans are eternally at strife between themselves; but if great chiefs like Angus and Murray will strike hands, and unite the tribes, they can muster a formidable array. Joining them with Northumberland and the dis-

affected earls, — Warren, Stanley, Leicester, and the rest, — we can, belike, force terms from the King. Would that I had not missed messages which my father most assuredly hath sent me! They may have fallen into the hands of the King."

The Baron was speaking rather to himself than to Percy. The latter, wondering at the strange analogies in names and circumstances which presented themselves, remarked, —

"But you speak of Angus and Murray. Surely these are Scottish names?"

"You say truly," replied the Baron. "Several younger sons of Scotch families joined our ancestors in the great migration. Among them were a Douglas, son of the Earl of Angus in Scotland; a Murray, Bothwells, Randolphs, Seatons, and the like. In fact, a ship was well filled with them and their dependents. Many were in the service of Louis the Eleventh, as you must already know, in France, and of his successor. They were granted fiefs in South England, far off in the North, and their mountain districts have kept them as truly Scotch as they ever were in old Scotland. They are as turbulent, too, as their ancestors; and 't is well for the peace of the kingdom that they are in so remote part of the land. They have, moreover, been ever friendly with us of Northumberland and Westmoreland, which was not to have been said in old England, as you be aware."

By this time the Doctor rejoined them. "I say,

Arthur," he cried, "I've never seen such remarkable geological phenomena as that gorge presents! Granitic and lava rocks mixed and contorted in every possible way! And these immense bowlders, brought from Heaven knows where (by ice, I say, of course, no other agency could have done it), and dropped in this spot, — why, it's wonderful beyond expression! I hope there'll be more of this where we are going. Oh, if I only had leisure and a stone hammer!"

And the Doctor gazed back ruefully, if enthusiastically, at the rocks they had left behind them. The Baron looked at him in puzzled amazement.

"Oh, geology's all right," replied Percy, laughing, "but you should have been with us! I've been investigating the native mountaineer in his own habitat. 'The proper study of mankind is man,' you know, Doctor dear."

"Oh, hang your psychology, if that's what you mean! I get enough of physiological man. ''T is my vocation, Hal.' But if I only had hammer, leisure, and a note-book, I'd have facts to stir up Cambridge and Boston with when I get back (if ever I do), which would addle some of their theorizing brains, I warrant you."

"You'd better take up conchology, Doctor, for you may run against some new shell in Mexico, if we ever get there," rejoined the Captain.

They were now passing through a most picturesque region. The forest was composed entirely of white

birch, very like our canoe birch ("*Betula papyracea*, I declare," muttered the Doctór, as he looked about him), the trees being of great age, the trunks measuring from two to three feet in diameter, some even attaining four feet. The undergrowth was at times, and in damp places, extremely thick and impenetrable, and was made up of species unknown to the Doctor and Percy, although many resembled some North American shrubs. The ferns were, in some cases, apparently identical with ours. The vegetation was well advanced, and a few flowers were observable in sheltered sunny spots, in open glades. They were evidently of the hardiest kinds, as the nightly frosts would have forbidden the development of anything delicate. Percy noticed violets of several species, and alders and willows waved graceful catkins in the breeze. The road crossed, or at times wound through, wild and dark chasms and ravines, where the rocky strata, rudely heaped and piled about in broken masses, showed the work of the earthquake. Their structure was mostly granite, with very wide dikes of trap occurring now and then. The Doctor had observed in the open country strong indications of the former presence of the glacier; but on the bared surfaces of the ground-down rocks in this hilly district, the glacial scratches or scorings were very distinct, running southwest and northeast.

The little streams and lakes were filled with water-fowl, and in the open glades ptarmigan abounded; while many other birds, large and small, were not

scarce. Crows, hawks, and eagles were frequently seen, as well as herons and a species of wild swan.

The party camped that night by a small stream, and on high ground, well sheltered. The aurora was brilliant, and the night clear. The march was resumed at an early hour and kept up steadily all day, through the gloomy depths of this immense forest. A few deer were seen, two being shot for venison, and several foxes and one large gray wolf fled from their track. A brownish black bear was surprised near a spring, but scuttled away into the wood upon their approach. Not a human being approached them, although two or three mountaineers were observed watching them from a high cliff, evidently greatly interested in the appearance of the Americans. They courteously raised and waved their bonnets as the column passed, and were plainly gratified at the return of their salute. Everything on their part denoted friendliness. Toward evening they reached lower land, and the forest was diversified by oak and beech growth, although still principally birch. At last they came to a broad, quiet, deep river.

"This is the Humber, my Lord," remarked the seneschal. "Now after another day's march we be in Northumberland."

They were obliged to turn to the left and proceed along its southerly bank for several miles, at last reaching a ford which was well known to Eric Danbold. This they easily made their way across, finding themselves then in a much more open country indeed,

showing here and there marks of former cultivation. Just at sunset they reached a range of hills bordering a northerly bend of the Humber, and upon the highest of these was perched a castle, having the inevitable squalid village under its walls. This was the hold of a certain William Fitz-Allan, who, being a friend of Lord Percy, received them joyously and lodged the whole party most hospitably. Like every one else in this country, he was overcome by wonder at the appearance and equipment of the Americans.

The next morning, after thanks and farewell to their kind host, they resumed the march, the road crossing the Humber by a ford again, at one of its windings. The country grew more and more inhabited, small towns and one or two castles being passed at some distance, and at nightfall they reached a point on the river where a small stream emptied into it. Here was a ferry, composed of a flat-bottomed boat capable of carrying half a dozen men and two horses at a trip. The aged ferryman would necessarily have consumed the entire night in transporting the detachment across, had he undertaken it alone. But the Americans took charge of the scow, and tying together their lariat ropes, stretched the line thus formed across the river, and loading the boat with men, they made the horses swim. By this means they ferried the whole party across in about two hours, much to the delight of Lord Reginald and his South English, who seemed to think the simple expedient a wonderful thing.

"I see now," remarked the Baron, "an example, verily, of the quick wit of Yankees."

Dr. Bruce, who was near him, stared. "How came you by that word, my Lord?" asked he.

"What may that be? 'Yankees?' Peradventure, my learned friend," continued Lord Reginald, laughing, "'there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in our philosophy.'"

The Doctor and Percy, who had come up, were astounded, and gazed without speaking at their friend, who still laughed.

"I cry you pardon!" he at length said. "But let us lie for the night in yonder wood, well sheltered from the wind, and thus be rested and prepared for a start by daybreak. We must essay to reach my father's castle of Ravensclyffe by dawn the day after to-morrow, if a night march will not too sorely weary you, gentlemen. For," he added, glancing again at the Doctor, "if the Percy is to make head against the power of any who may come against us, preparation must be set on foot as early as may be. For 'there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune.'"

"Truly, I do not understand this," cried the mystified Captain. "How came you to know Shakespeare?"

"Ah! 'thereby hangs a tale,'" replied the Baron. "But when we have eaten, and are couched before a fire, and thou hast lighted that wondrous roll of dried herbs yclept 'the weed,' I will a tale un-

fold' at which, although 't will not 'harrow up thy soul,' you shall marvel roundly."

At the time appointed Lord Reginald proceeded to relate the following remarkable story to the Captain alone, Dr. Bruce having fallen asleep before half of his cigar was ashes.

CHAPTER IV.

A REMARKABLE STORY.

In faith 't was strange, 't was passing strange.

Othello.

"PERADVENTURE you know not, kinsman, that Percy of Northumberland liveth in and ruleth his great earldom almost as an independent prince, owning fealty, nathless, to the King. But, separated from the southern and central portions of the island by the great mountain chain and by the White Forest, and in close alliance and centuries-long friendship with the powerful Marquis of Westmoreland, whose mountain territories lie adjacent to Northumberland on the west, it is not matter of wonder that the loyalty of these great crown vassals, as well as that of their northern neighbors and sometime allies, — Douglas, Murray, and others, — should sit lightly upon them. Risings have taken place, with, more than once, grievous happenings in their train. For, although Northumbria hath ne'er been overrun when the Percies were out against the King, yet, several times, the power of the realm hath been brought against us, and more than one of our race hath died upon the block. My great grandsire lost his head on

Tower Hill in 1793. I myself am Master of the Horse to his Royal Highness the Prince, not by wish of my father nor myself, but by command of the King, which it was prudent to obey. What this rising may mean now, I cannot guess. It may well be but in the jealous mind of the King, who would fain provoke us to resistance and then crush us, having, as he supposed, myself in his hands, and my cousin Lord George Dorset also in South London, whom he hath already cruelly slaughtered, — but I cannot speak of this with dry eyes.

"To go on with my tale. We have our own ships, and it hath been our dear wish and dream to discover a passage out of this ice-locked sea, that we may know the Old World again. And so, a year since come midsummertide, my father sent a ship, well-fared, to sail northward, and to try to stem the Warm Current, and attain to the open ocean beyond. The endeavor was vain; yet the voyage brought marvellous fruits, which are known only to the ship's company, and to the Earl and his family and a few trusted friends. For all those who sailed were afterward taken into the Earl's household, and with great rewards sworn to silence. They are all Northumbrians, and faithful. For, got the tidings abroad on the wind, ill might it fare with my father and me that the King were kept unknowing of the matter. Methinks even now it may well be that some knowledge of it have reached the tyrant, and hence our trouble. Be that as it may, the ship passed into

the strait whence issues the Warm Current, with much travail. Beyond that she might not prevail. But they found a large and strangely made ship, more like to yours than to ours of South England, which was half wrecked, and had been driven through the ice from the Atlantic broad ocean the autumn before, and, with masts gone and half her company dead, she lay within a sheltered bay at anchor. She was laden partly with coals, though not like what we have in our mines, but harder. Her people had taken to the shores, and had builded huts there; and those who lived had found meat by hunting and fishing through the dark months. Now, kinsman, much will you ponder over what cometh after. When our people found them, but three weak, sick, famished men were at the huts. The rest of the company had gone forth, a long month ere that day, to essay to find some way so might they free themselves from the ice and escape their awful doom. Belike they perished in the wilderness, for ne'er returned one of them to tell the tale. Of the three found by our ship's company, only one lived to come here with them. He was, like yourself, an American, and had been a high officer in what was yclept by him the Confederate States Army, — rebels, I ween, to your Republic. But he, wearying of the strife, and having lost his two sons in battle, had given up the cause and become an exile from his land, leaving it and taking with him that which he set most store by, which were goodly quantity of books, imprinted in

black-letter, and some having rarely beautiful presentments, together with the tales, of all things pertaining to the acts related. Many of these fair as an illuminated missal of old! The imprinting was so much better than the work of our craftsmen, and the paper so soft and clear, we had not dreamed such to be among the nations of the earth. In good sooth the store of books was worth a prince's ransom. We deemed the man to be of greatest wealth and consequence from these his possessions, but he told us what seemed wondrous, that books like unto these were common to all men, clerkly or of rank, in Europe, and to almost all men whatsoever in America. Moreover, not books alone had he, but large sheets of imprinting yclept 'newspapers,' which, by the dates impressed upon them, we saw to have been tidings of every day, for all men to read. And almost all Americans, he said, could make shift to decipher them. In these were store of tales of great battles fought by huge armies in your land. I bethink me of one glorious passage of arms of three days' length, at a burgh named 'Gettysburg' (if I call it aright). I took note that some scores of thousands were slain in that strife."

"Yes," remarked Percy, bewildered at the singularity of the circumstances; "I myself fought there."

"By 'r Lady, how strange!" ejaculated the Baron; "and I talk with you who say that! But the wonders of those books! They were of history, poesy, knowledge, romance, wisdom untold. My father the Earl,

I myself, and my sister, who is convent taught, read night and day all that autumn and winter, devouring the books like as they were venison pasties. And we are, in good sooth, crammed full of much learning; for we loved much the books of poesy, counting as first those of the great minstrel of Old England, William Shakespeare. I learned store of him by heart, and thus at times can use his words in my talk. Furthermore, his language smacketh more of our way of speaking than ours doth of yours, or the English of these days. And somewhat he singeth of our family of the Percy. Very blythe is the Earl my father, of those plays. Next to Shakespeare, loved we the poesy of a certain Sir Walter Scott. Then came there other noble minstrelsy, and tales of romance, and a score of volumes of all knowledge, surnamed 'Encyclopædia Britannica;' and a vast book of a roll or list of all known English words, yclept a 'Dictionary.' This book readeth much my Lord the Earl, ne'er tiring for, it may be, a half-day; for his malady (which may it please God speedily to mend) hath kept him within his castle walls for two years and more.

"But read we, moreover, all history beside, and tongue cannot tell the wonders that therein we have found.

"The story of most nations of Europe seemeth to me to be only that of the natural advance or progress which hath been making head in the world since the first coming out of the nations from the dark-

ness which had enveloped Europe following upon the downfall of the Roman empire; but the tale of your land, from its discovery, through the day of its colonization and settlement, eftsoon of its growth, after of its revolt against England, of its wondrous progress since, even so up to the time when this man and his books fell into our hands, — all this seemeth more mighty and marvellous than all else in history or tradition of past time. For I do perceive that now, for the first time in the world, all men have their equal rights; yet doth that not breed ruin and confusion, but your rulers seem more wise and powerful than kings, and yet your people are right loyal and obedient to these lords of their own making. And this rebellion in your land hath naught to do (if I rightly judge) with these matters, but cometh from special causes, which I comprehend not.

"Much have my father and I had converse respecting these things; and much with him, our guest, the American exile, who died, I am assured in my mind, of a heartbreak, after abiding with us for some months' space. He was a right noble gentleman, and had been, I 'd lay my gage on 't, a gallant warrior. Many scars wore he from his battles. But he died right remorseful, and yet gladly withal; for in his fever moaned he strange words, and of a sudden, coming to his mind, he demanded what day was that. And Father Peter answering him, he muttered proudly, —

"'Ay, this was the day we stormed the castle of Chapultepec.' But then he, moaning again, murmured, 'Ah, but that was under the glorious stars and stripes!' (What meaning had his words?) And yet again: —

"'And my boys died, and I bled, fighting against that flag! And here lie I, out of the world, and yet living, but never more to see that dear country! God send me sweet death quickly!' And as he moaned and raved anon, he turned his face to shut out the light of the sun, and so died.

"Now, not only have my father the Earl, and I, and some trusted friends here in the North, all great barons and of power and consequence, read and studied closely the history of England and of America, those two most powerful free nations, but much have we consulted as to whether anything could be done to help our own land and people in like manner, as speedily as may be. Verily, the undertaking were a huge one; for we greatly opine that the wealth and power of the English-speaking nations are due to their civilization, and the cultivation and growth of the arts and of knowledge, and to that freedom of the common people which fits them, being also reasonably educated in wisdom, to make a most important part of a nation which leadeth the world. And I do recollect me of a writer of yours called Thomas Paine, whose words, well pondered, have great power. I am greatly moved by them; yet beshrew me if I am of his mind in all things

which he saith. But if we can bring such things as have you, to pass in South England, we may yet come up in the race to the century in which you live, lagging no longer three or four hundred years after you. And 't were like that, our people being free and taught, there would follow knowledge and cunning wisdom, which would teach us how to conquer the difficulties which enchain us here in this part of the world, afar from all other peoples."

"Upon my word, my Lord, you talk like a nineteenth century reformer!" said Percy, laughing. "I commend most heartily your views, but I warn you they are far in advance of those of the majority of the so-called civilized nations of the earth. In fact, we ourselves are engaged in a gigantic war with a large minority of our own countrymen, who do not believe in the rights of man, and who rebel against the government because, primarily, of their fear that the institution of slavery (which exists only in the rebellious States of the Republic) is in danger from the ruling power."

"Yes," replied the Baron, gravely, "I gather as much from the books and papers which I have read. Now, peradventure, you may marvel to hear one of my rank and place say what followeth; but I have thought much about these things since the fortune which hath favored us with the books which converse so fully of these matters. And our manner of life seemeth in many ways fell tyranny over those whom it would best beseem us to use in different fashion,

giving them fairer chance of happiness and justice. I know 't would be vain to essay to rid our land of feudalism in a day, when it hath taken Europe ever since what you call the Middle Ages, to begin to emerge from its darkness; but we can take the first steps by the light of the history of your progress, which shineth from the pages of those books like the fiery cross on the mountains at midnight.

"But here I hold converse, while night waneth. We might with greater profit be sleeping, for the morrow's march will be a weary one; yet 't will bring us to fair Northumbria."

"Faith, my Lord," replied the American, "I don't know that any other consideration than that of reaching Northumbria could tempt me to a long march to-morrow, for that abominable long drawn-out voyage has quite unfitted me for such a ride in rough country. I'm afraid Pelham's troopers are pretty well used up, too, from the way they drag along. They could better have borne a fortnight's forced march before that voyage, than one of half the length so soon after coming ashore."

"By my halidom, cousin, and I bethought me not of your long sea voyage. 'T was unkind of me to have pushed you so hard. 'T were better to take two days more for the journey."

"No, no, my dear sir; let us push on to-morrow as you proposed. We can stand it, I guess."

The South-Englishman stared. "I cry you pardon, kinsman," he said, "but — you *guess*? Now

have I seen that manner of words in some of your American newspapers which we have at Ravensclyffe. They were mostly in one sheet imprinted in a city called Boston, if I ween aright. Prithee, when you say 'I guess,' and there hath been no riddle propounded thereon to guess, — is that the expression used by Americans and English to-day? I would fain learn these new ways of speech."

Percy laughed heartily. "No, and yes," he said. "That is one of the points on which the English deride us, as a 'Yankeeism,' that is to say, a colloquial expression peculiar to the people of our New England States. I do not advise its adoption by you."

The other pondered a moment, sleepily; but fatigue overcame all desire for further talk, and silence and slumber prevailed.

The next day's journey was through a country more level and open; and although the road led through no towns, yet it passed within sight of several castles, surrounded by the inevitable villages, and across the moors to eastward they caught glimpses of two cities in the distance. These, the baron said, were on the line of the great Norman Way and national high-road to the North, toward which they were diagonally converging. With but a short halt at noon, they pushed forward, and, early in the afternoon, found themselves ascending a steep and rugged line of hills, hardly high enough to be called mountains. Still they were much broken and rocky, and

covered with forest. Upon reaching the top a fine view broke upon them. To northward stretched a hilly and fairly wooded country, through which led a broad highway. At the foot of the height upon which they stood ran a swift and deep river, not very wide, but having wild and rocky banks. On an eminence directly in front was a strong castle, with quite a town lying below it and along the bank. The river widened toward the east, and several vessels lay moored in the stream or at wharves. They were of all sizes, from fishing-boats to ships. The banner, flying from the highest tower of the castle, bore the cognizance of the Percy family, with some additional quarterings.

The Americans gazed at the scene with admiration. Lord Percy looked at them with a proud smile. "Welcome, gentlemen," he said, "to fair Northumbria! For at the southern base of the range of hills we crossed the bounds of my father the Earl's dominion. Yonder lies the Earl's castle and town of Tyneside. This river is the Tyne, and the sea is twelve good miles away to eastward, beyond those mountains. This castle and village over against us, yclept 'Tyneholme,' pertain to my father's cousin, Sir Brian Percy of Tyneholme, — as gallant a knight as weareth spurs, and as ponderous I ween. Right royal welcome meet we there."

And right royal welcome met they there. Sir Brian proved to be a hearty, choleric, fine old fellow, of some three hundred pounds' weight, and of

only some five feet six inches in stature. For some years he had been compelled to deny himself the gratification of mounting a horse, when in armor of proof, for the reason that no horse had been found which could sustain his weight and stand up under it. All this was a great trial to him, for he had been a mighty hunter in his day, as well as a dashing warrior. He could not do enough in the way of hospitality for his cousin and the Americans, and insisted upon their remaining a day, for a hunting party. But this pleasure Lord Reginald felt compelled to decline, with many thanks, after spending two or three hours at Sir Brian's towers, and supping with him. "We will gladly come back this way, if it may be so, cousin," he said in parting, "and taste again your good cheer; but time is now but straitened for us, and we must needs go forward."

It was discovered, however, that the Doctor's horse had cast a shoe, and that several of the troopers' and men-at-arms' steeds were in like condition, after the journey over the rough roads of the mountains; Lord Reginald therefore recalled his farewell, and prayed Sir Brian to receive the train for the night. Nothing, it seemed, could have better pleased the old knight, who combined the best qualities of bully Sir John Falstaff with his avoirdupois; and after a deal of bustling and choleric fussing, the whole party was provided for. The old fellow was, however, devoutly set upon the American officers'

and Lord Reginald's "making a night of it" with him. Nothing would suit him but that they should sit around his hospitable board until nearly sunrise. The Doctor, with whom Sir Brian at once instituted a great intimacy, gave a synoptical sketch of the history of the world, as far as known up to that hour, greatly to the admiration of all the South English present, and the puffing excitement of the knight, who swore that such a man as Doctor Bruce should never be allowed to leave South England again, but be held there and heaped with honors and emoluments, and put at the head of the universities.

Percy has insisted in his diary that the South English were always temperate; but he does acknowledge that, on this occasion, Sir Brian was slightly affected convivially, and actually embraced him, Percy, as a cousin from the antipodes. Still, he continues to insist that the fat knight was merely enthusiastic, and by no means unduly alcoholic. I prefer to believe him implicitly. This faith accords best with the general character of the South English for temperance; and Percy evidently thinks that no exceptions were necessary in order to prove this rule.

As a natural result of their long sitting of the night before, and also on account of the necessary attentions of the farriers to the barefooted horses, the march was resumed only at a late hour of the succeeding morning. The Americans noted a different and more manly bearing on the part of burgher and peasant after crossing the Tyne; and the towns

and castles were more cleanly, sweet, and habitable, than had been the case nearer the capital.

So they went forward to the northeast, and marched, without a halt, until early in the afternoon, crossing gloomy moors and plunging through thick woods. Finally, emerging from the forest, they heard the beating of the surf, and soon found the way leading to and surmounting a rocky cliff. Upon the edge of this, overhanging the sea, was a very large and strong castle, having a goodly sized town below it, along the crags and on the downs beneath. A promontory swept around from the north, in a semicircle, so as almost completely to enclose a little bay, which was also protected from the side of the ocean by several islands, which almost land-locked it. In this bay lay numerous vessels, mostly small fishing-craft; but there were ships also of large size, and most of these heavily armed, lying at anchor. All these latter, as well as the castle, flew the banner of the Percy.

As soon as the little cavalcade came in sight of the warders on the battlements, and Lord Reginald's pennon and the guidon of the American troop — the forked stars and stripes — became visible, it was seen that the walls were being quickly manned. Immediately a salute of ten guns was fired from culverins, while drum and trumpet sounded welcome, and the drawbridge rattled down as they neared the moat. Upon the further side, extending from the portcullis into the courtyard, was drawn up a body of men-at-

arms, and the Earl's own pennon was displayed by the knight in command.

These presented their lances in their fashion, as the column passed the gate, and courteous greetings were exchanged between the knight and Lord Percy and the American officers.

As they emerged from beneath the gateway, a beautiful scene was presented. A large courtyard of several acres in extent opened in front. The interior was of fine turf. A number of large trees bordered this lawn. A roadway about fifty feet wide extended around the margin, and a straight avenue reached from the gate to the opposite side of the courtyard. At its further extremity was the entrance to the great hall of the castle, under a gothic archway, at the head of a wide flight of six stone steps. Several high and strong towers were situated at the angles and along the sides of the rectangular walls which enclosed the courtyard. On the landward side these towers appeared to be of immense strength. Between them, built out from the walls, were buildings apparently used as storehouses, stables, dwellings for retainers, and other purposes. The sea or cliff side of the castle was the one containing the palace, so to speak, or apartments of the family. It was very strongly fortified, even against the other towers and walls and courtyard of the castle itself, and was evidently intended to be the citadel of the fortress. Culverins mounted on its towers commanded all points inland as well as on the sea side,

and the great banner of the Earl of Northumberland flew from its highest turret.

At the foot of the steps, before the gothic archway, stood a group of men. Conspicuous before the others was a tall, handsome man of about sixty-five years, wearing a furred cloak or mantle, and with a bonnet of otter skin drawn over his head. Lord Percy's men-at-arms were in front, and they moved forward, followed by the Americans, who had formed column of fours after entering the gate. Lord Reginald invited Percy and the Doctor to ride up with him, and upon arriving in presence of the old gentleman all dismounted. The Baron instantly knelt down before the Earl (for it was he), and received his father's blessing.

"Now God be praised, my son!" said the old man, much affected. "I have not touched pillow these seven nights, nor scarce slept, lest I ne'er lay eyes upon thy fair head more, since I heard thy cousin made such bloody ending. I dreaded lest thou shouldest have failed to escape the tyrant. Harry rode out on the Norman Way, with two hundred men-at-arms, to meet thee, as far as Dead Man's Fens; but he met the Ben-Ardlac, who hath craved peace with us and struck hands in token of lasting alliance and amity. He told Harry that your party was safe in the mountains in his country, your rear guarded by his stout mountaineers; and Harry ranged the Norman Way slowly back, in case of any party trying to intercept thee after leaving the mountains.

He is only returned this morning, knowing of thy safety. All 's well now. But my brother Chester is as the dead, since he had the awful news of his son's murder, and we are getting together our powers here in the North to strike for our lives. Thou wilt hear news indeed, son. But beshrew me! I lag in courtesy toward our noble guests," he added, turning toward Percy and the Doctor.

"This gentleman, my father, is the brevet-Colonel Bruce, the medical director, or surgeon-in-chief, of the American army. And this is the Captain Arthur Percy, our kinsman, of whom I sent you knowledge. These are officers of most approved valor and esteem, being of the household of the distinguished American General Vaughn, who commands the army, which with the fleet now tarries in South England near the King's city."

The Earl took the hands of Bruce and Percy with great cordiality, saying, "Our guests are right welcome to our poor house of Ravensclyffe. Colonel Bruce, you honor us with your presence here. My son hath admonished me of your great learning and skill in all knowledge. Cousin Percy, I know of none who could pleasure me more rarely, by tasting my bread and salt, than one of our blood from the great empire beyond seas. But what array is this?" he asked, in surprise, as he turned to the front, at the clashing of arms.

Captain Pelham had come up with his troop, following Lord Reginald's men-at-arms, and now had formed

"left front into line," opposite the Earl; and as the latter turned to face the American cavalry, the sharp order rang out, "Present sabres!" Then, whirling his horse to the left about, Pelham dropped the point of his own broadsword. The Earl instantly perceived the salute tendered him, and waved his hand in graceful acknowledgment.

"This," said his son, in reply to his question, "is Captain Pelham's troop, being the guard or train of these gentlemen. It is led by a young gentleman of great courage and conduct in the wars, and by lieutenants not less worthy. I knew it would greatly pleasure your Lordship to have this troop brought, for Ravensclyffe ne'er lacks bread nor bed for friend nor friend's train."

"You say true, son," replied the Earl, "and have done well in bringing hither such a brave array. But their leaders seem but beardless boys. Surely, the Americans must be soldiers from the cradle. See them well bestowed, man and horse, and bring the leaders, that I may welcome them."

Captain Pelham and the lieutenants were consequently presented, and then the Earl turned to lead the way into the great hall, saying at the same time to his son: "Haste, now, Reginald, to thy mother's bower. She hath fared grievously for days, as did I, lest evil befall thee. Thy sister is with her."

The great hall was nearly two hundred feet in length, and half as wide, and some eighteen feet high. It was finished like the interior of the castle as a whole,

in a style similar to the Gothic. The Earl had led the way to a sort of parlor at the end of this hall, which was hung with tapestry representing the landing of William the Conqueror. The furniture consisted of heavy oaken benches and large chairs, all of which were dark with age and highly polished. Several tables stood about, and on them were brass or iron candlesticks holding huge tallow or wax candles, for illumination at night.

"Sit ye down, gentlemen, and rest awhile," said his Lordship, "and drink a cup of our cheering waters."

Immediately servants appeared bearing trays, upon which were silver tankards containing very fair wines.

After some questions about the journey, the Earl said, "It will pleasure you, doubtless, gentlemen, to retire for a space to your apartments; after which I shall be grateful if ye will walk with me to the stables, for I would fain gaze upon the superb horses ridden by you, for the likes of such never were seen in this land."

The American officers were consequently shown to rooms pleasantly situated, overlooking the court, and furnished with curtained bedsteads, settles, and large dishes of water for bathing purposes, as well as tables and chairs. The walls were hung with tapestry. Polished steel mirrors were disposed near the deeply cut windows. Here they laid aside their arms, and changed their undress for full uniform. Upon returning to the parlor, they found the Earl, Lord Reginald,

and a young gentleman who proved to be the Earl's younger son, Sir Harry Percy, — a fine, handsome fellow of some twenty-one years.

"My son Harry is the Hotspur of the family," remarked the Earl, laughing. "He won his spurs years since, and well representeth your Shakespeare's hero."

The young man laughed also, and colored modestly; and although he might have appeared a "Hotspur" in war, he seemed a quiet gentleman in piping times of peace.

The Earl then took Percy's arm, apologizing for a feebleness due to a malady of some years' standing, and led the way to the stables, which stood on one side of the courtyard. Percy was astonished at the superior character of the home for the horses, which was vastly better and finer than the accommodations which he had seen for servants and retainers in castles which he had visited near South London, and incomparably cleaner and more comfortable than the dwellings of the lower classes which he had seen elsewhere. He learned afterward that retainers of the Percy were lodged and fed as if there were some such things as cleanliness and godliness in Northumbria, if not in the southerly counties of South England. There was a fine stud of horses belonging to the Earl, but not one of them would compare with the horses of the American officers. As has been said before, the colors of all South English horses were either a light bay, gray, or

sorrel. No blacks, mahogany bays, or chestnuts had ever been seen there; and consequently those of the American officers, which were all dark bays or chestnuts (except the one which Percy rode, which was jet black), excited the greatest curiosity and admiration. They were from two to four hands higher, and two to three hundred pounds heavier than the largest South English horses. The Earl was like a boy in his pleasure at seeing the animals, and as for Sir Harry, he was nearly beside himself with excitement.

"Do you not ride at all now, my Lord?" asked Percy of the old gentleman.

"Sooth to say," was the reply, "I have not had foot in stirrup for two years last Michaelmas, until now, a fair month since, I essayed a short mile on my old charger, Sir Launcelot. Thanks to the blessed Saint Hubert of the Well, to whom I vowed a new chalice for the chapel in Tyneside Forest, I was not harmed, but the better withal, for the essay. And seven times since have I bestrode the beast without worse hap."

"Then would you honor us by being present at a dress parade at some hour of the afternoon agreeable to your Lordship? And would you further give me the pleasure of riding my horse Black Owl? Were you in full health and strength, my Lord, I should not presume to suggest that he will be as quiet as a cradle if you desire it, although when aroused as full of fire and spirit as the boldest horseman could wish."

The Earl's face flushed with joy. "I thank you heartily, kinsman," he replied. "It will rarely pleasure me to accept your courtesy. But what will you bestride? The poor beasts in my stable are all at your service, but none can match your black."

"Pardon me, my Lord, I find them a beautiful lot of creatures, although not, perhaps, so large as ours; but with your permission I will ride my bay, which brought my servant hither. I am more fond of him even than of my black, for he saved my life in battle."

"I prithee tell me how, kinsman."

"Well, sir, it was in the great cavalry fight at Gettysburg, to the right of the main battle. It was a bitter struggle, and we were mingled in the *mêlée*. All about me had been killed or wounded, and I was dizzy from heat and loss of blood, when several of the enemy rode at me from the right hand, while I was being surrounded from other points."

"By my faith! and that were right perilous, cousin," interrupted the Earl.

"Just as they closed, my horse swerved to the right, and then, turning sharply to the front again, raised himself and sprang high in air, alighting fairly on the neck and withers of the nearest rebel trooper's horse. This beast of course went to earth, bearing however with him two more. My bay managed to keep his feet, and I clung fast to the saddle; and although the splendid creature received a sabre point in his neck, he bore me safely out of the press

and into our line, before I fell from his back. So you see why I love him."

"By my halidom, cousin, but that beast should sit in my hall, an he had done the like for me," cried the Earl; "and this is he? Certes, cousin, he is of rare beauty."

"That he is, my Lord. Here is the scar on his neck."

The Earl's enthusiasm was freshly aroused by the sight of this noble horse, and the other fine animals were next inspected and admired, after which Sir Harry carried off Pelham and his officers to view the kennels and mews. Percy and the Doctor accompanied their host to his parlor again, where he reclined, as was his wont, upon a couch; and the trio talked of horses, until the edifying conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a page, a pretty little fellow, dressed very much as Shakespeare's pages dress for the stage. Dropping on one knee, gracefully, to the Earl, he delivered himself of his message as follows: —

"Her Ladyship the Countess presenteth, with this red rose, her heart's best wish for her Lord's health this day, and hearing that he hath with him fair guests from far lands, desireth that it may please him to bring them to her bower, as she had not the strength, being but indifferent well, to welcome them in his good company when they crossed his threshold."

"Say to her Ladyship, Amyas," replied the Earl,

with a smile, and pinching the chubby boy's ear, "that we will eftsoon pay our devoirs at her shrine, bringing our thanks in person for her gracious message, and by so pleasing a herald. What say you, gentlemen; shall we marry performance to promise, and go at once?"

"By all means, my Lord," replied the Doctor. "And a most charming bridal it will be." The Earl laughed, and taking the Doctor's arm, they went on, followed by Percy.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE CAPTAIN IS WOUNDED AND TAKEN PRISONER BY CUPID.

> Oh, how quick is love!
> *Venus and Adonis.*

THE way led through a winding, wainscoted passage, up a flight of stone steps, and through a doorway, into a beautiful apartment, hung with blue tapestry, representing the Trojan war. At the end of this room were the largest windows that Percy had seen in the castle, — the lower sashes glazed in diamond panes, the upper in colored glass, representing the nativity. In a deep recess on one side stood a small altar, with a statue of the Virgin, having candles burning before it. The furniture of this room was much more elaborate than that elsewhere in the castle. In fact there were many articles of old-fashioned luxury scattered about, which evidently had come from France with the first emigrants, four centuries before. On a table lay several books of antique style. A door on the side, partially concealed by the arras, and which stood partly open, led into the Countess's bedchamber, in which were to be seen her maids. The lady herself was seated in a large chair by the

window, and standing near her was Lord Reginald. A young girl stood behind her chair, somewhat in the shadow of some drapery.

As the gentlemen advanced, the Countess arose and came forward, smiling, extending her hand to the Earl, who carried it to his lips, saying: —

"Good-morrow, Dame Alice! Methinks thou 'rt o'er pale this day. I thank thee for the beauteous rose sent me by hands of Amyas. 'T is the first of the season, I ween. I bring my fair guests, as by thy command. Lady Percy, here is the Colonel Bruce, medical director of the American army now guests of the King, and Captain Percy of the General's household. This young gentleman is, by descent, of the old Percy family in Northumberland in England, and a kinsman of our own. Make them right welcome."

"Indeed, and that were a joy, both for their sakes and our own," said the lady, extending her hand to the Doctor, who took and kissed it with a profound bow. She then turned to Percy, who went through with the same ceremony, and she continued: —

"It is certes a rare chance which bringeth a kinsman from so far away to visit us. We are much beholden to our son for the happiness of seeing you, fair sirs, and we trust that you will tarry long at Ravensclyffe."

"We thank you heartily, Madam," replied Percy. "Be assured that every moment which we are permitted to spend here will be a source of greatest pleasure to us."

In speaking, Percy had the opportunity of observing the Countess more closely. She was of medium height, of light complexion, with blue eyes and very pale cheeks. She had certainly possessed great beauty, and was still handsome, with a most winning smile.

"But where is our Kate?" asked the Earl. "Ah, Kate, come forth, and greet these guests of ours. Here is the Colonel Bruce, and a new cousin of thine own, — Captain Arthur Percy."

The maiden, thus bidden, came forward, blushing, and offered her hand and then her cheek to Bruce, who took the one, and imprinted a hearty kiss upon the other. The old rogue (he must have been forty at least) had not already visited several noble families, having young daughters, in the neighborhood of South London, without learning something of the customs of the country. But when the young lady turned to Percy, he took her hand with trembling reverence, and gazed upon her beautiful face in speechless and immovable admiration. The old Earl, after looking on a moment in surprise, burst into laughter.

"What, man!" he cried, "canst not see her lips? Is this the way that gallant cousins meet fair ones in America? Beshrew me, but you stand a bowshot off from her."

Thus adjured, Percy started, came to himself, took a step forward, and touched his lips to those of the lady with such an expression of awe-struck worship in his face that the Earl cried: —

"Tut, man! she's only flesh and blood, like the rest of us. Go, take her aside, and tell her somewhat of the wonders of thy land, while the Colonel Bruce doth the like for her mother. Son Reginald, give me thine arm to my library. I would fain consult with thee upon matters of moment."

"Wilt sit with me in the wainscot of the window, and talk of thy railroad cars, thy great ships and cities, the wonders of thy Western world, and discourse of the beauty of the maidens thereof?" asked the young lady, archly. "Nay, look not amazed! Thou'rt not the first American whom I've seen."

"Ah, yes, I remember!" replied Percy. "You had as guest one of our rebels."

"Rebel or no, a most charming gentleman," rejoined she. "Alack! Methinks he made but a sad end of it, far from home and kindred. My heart went out to him."

"Happy he was in that, then," said Percy, gazing admiringly at her. "I think I could die content for such a heart."

"Go to, thou saucy boy!" cried the lady, laughing and blushing. "What! this to me, and on a short moment's acquaintance? Is it thus thou talkest to thine American maidens? I should weigh thee for a gallant fresh from La Nouvelle France. Go to again! Cease this singing-bird talk, and tell me first of the ladies of thy land. Are they fair, or dark? tall, or of low stature? And what is their raiment? Let thy memory serve thee well in this

last, for I would fain be wise, and know much of the ways of the world, and learn how to array myself when I go to visit my cousins in America."

"Oh, woman, woman, the same the world over!" sighed Percy. "Faith, you are wise enough now, my Lady, like the others, — only far more so in that you know how, with a word and a smile, to bewitch the men to their undoing."

"What! at it again?" said the girl, with a frown. "Nay, then, I'll leave thee, to go to hear the Colonel Bruce, who is in wise discourse with my mother." And she prepared to rise.

"What art thou at now, Kate?" called the Countess. "Fie, girl! thy tongue is ever like a lance-point, dipped in honey. Heed her not, kinsman, or give her better than she send, if she be shrewish." Then the Countess turned, laughing, to the Doctor again.

"Alack!" sighed the girl. "So my Lady meaneth by that for me to stay. But I will e'en hold my tongue, and listen to thee, if thou be not too wearisome. And now," she suddenly went on, with sparkling eyes, and turning to him with interest, "let me hear thee talk of the matters I named."

Thus commanded, Percy's tongue was unloosed. To do the young man justice, he was a fascinating conversationalist, when in the mood; and that he now most certainly was, for there before him, with beautiful eyes ever and anon seeking his, only to drop before his admiring glances, and with ears drinking in the wonders he recounted in his graceful style, sat

the most exquisite creature whom he had ever seen. So he thought; and I, who write this, quite sympathize with his enthusiastic admiration, and do not marvel at his falling in love at sight, as he had already done. I speak by the card, for I have before me, as I write, a fine miniature of this young lady, executed upon ivory, by a South English artist, very celebrated in that country, and, in fact, knighted by the King for his talent. Could you, reader, see it, you would be silent with wonder at her beauty. When you had admired this enough, you would naturally ask whence came that round hole in the lower corner of the picture, of half an inch in diameter, which pierces clean the case and ivory. Well, wait. You will know in time.

The miniature corresponds with Percy's description of the original, which I will give here. She was tall, straight as an arrow, and graceful as a fawn. Great masses of light auburn hair crowned her beautiful head and fell in carelessly disposed waves low on her forehead. A heavy braid of it, wound with pearls, descended at her back, almost to her feet. Her very deep blue eyes looked from beneath arched brows of a hue much darker than her hair. Her form was that of a wood-nymph. Her manner was a strange mixture of unconstrained gayety, tempered by a demure propriety. She was remarkably well-informed and educated, considering the customs and influences under which she had been reared. Her accomplishments, though peculiar to her time (if I

may so designate it), would, as far as they went, have fitted her to adorn even our best society.

Could Arthur Percy have helped his love at sight for this mediæval maiden? He was but human, after all. So was she to you and to me, O reader! But to return to the tale, made up from his diary.

An hour flitted by as a moment, and all too soon; the Earl and Lord Reginald returned, and the old gentleman said: —

"Come, kinsman, I am all impatience to try thy black charger. Wilt please thee to ride with me?"

"Most certainly, my Lord," replied Percy.

The Earl looked at him for a moment, and then burst into a loud laugh, saying: "Nay, never look so rueful, lad. I see 't is so long since thou didst bid farewell to the fair American damsels, that converse with my Kate bringeth thee merriment. Kate, wilt ride with us?"

"That I will, if I may, my father," replied the girl, casting a blushing glance at Percy.

"Ah, that will be delightful!" cried Percy, eagerly. "Lady Kate, will you honor me by riding my bay? He is easily handled by a woman. My sister has often ridden him at home."

"Oh, thanks to you, sir!" replied the girl, joyfully; "if my father wills."

"I am content," said the Earl; "but what will it please you to ride, Captain?"

"Well, the Doctor has a fine horse, which he had of me before we sailed. I may use him, Doctor?"

"By all means, my dear fellow," replied the Doctor. "Use him all the time you are here, if you wish. I have my chestnut here, you know. My man can ride one of the native horses."

"And do you honor us with your presence, Colonel Bruce?" asked the Earl.

"Now, my Lord," expostulated the Countess, — "you would fain carry away all the guests. The Colonel hath not yet finished his rare tales of life in his own land; I am wondrous selfish, and bid him stay."

"I fear his Lordship does not consider the sacrifice he requires of me, in asking me to tear myself away from the charming presence of his lady, even to ride with him," said the Doctor, with a bow of remarkable profundity.

"Oh, well might I have looked for this!" said the Earl, laughing. "You Americans seem 'as gallant in bower as dauntless in fray,' as our minstrel hath it. Well, I will e'en give up thy fair company for the lady's sake."

So saying they descended to the hall. Lady Kate appeared soon, clad in garments that permitted her bestriding a horse like a man; for that was the custom in South England, as it should be everywhere. Nothing is more absurd than the foolish and dangerous fashion in vogue in America and Europe, — of a woman's touching upon one side of a horse, as if the beast were an argument.

The South English saddles resembled very closely

the American war saddles; and, strange to say, they used the cinch instead of a girth, which improvement has been adopted in our army in late years. The bridles were exactly like those of the Americans; and the American horses were, therefore, happily not worried by any material change of equipment.

At the hall door stood the animals. Percy's bay was brought forward for Lady Kate to mount; Percy himself stepped to her side and was about to take her hand to assist her, but was somewhat disconcerted to see the girl place her hands on the pommel and cantle, and, with a movement like that of a bird rising to take wing, vault into her seat most gracefully. The Earl laughed at his surprise, and said, —

"Thou 'rt doubtless a good horseman, kinsman, but wilt do well to match that damsel's horsemanship. She was taught to ride by her old father."

The gentlemen mounted and set forward; Percy noticed that they were followed by several grooms at a little distance. After passing the gate and drawbridge, they rode down through the town, and thence out upon the moor. The old nobleman and his daughter were, indeed, consummate horsemen, both of them, for the lady was not what we consider a good horsewoman; she was quite as bold and daring in handling her horse as any man would be, and put him through every pace and movement of which he was capable, and also tried to induce him to undertake some sideways jumps, which the animal con-

temptuously declined to learn. Seeing this she laughed merrily, and caressed him, saying, —

"Your charger is but too well satisfied with that which he hath already learned in America, and will fain do naught strange to pleasure a damsel withal."

The old Earl meanwhile, who had ridden off alone across the moor for a mile, now returned to the party, and said to Percy: "Methinks, cousin, I never rode steed before, yet our horses be fine beasts; but to be upon such a tall and powerful animal is such as no man here knoweth thereof the joy. Kinsman, would that I had bestridden the like before my fighting days were o'er!"

But here the lady interrupted the conversation, saying, "I cry you pardon, my Lord, but were it not meet that we ride to the castle? It should be the hour for a refection, and I fear our guests have been waiting but too long for our good cheer."

"Beshrew me, Kate, but thou 'rt a good housewife. Woe is me, but these horses have made me forget our friends' needs! Let us, indeed, speed to the castle, where I dare swear the table groaneth to be lightened."

The homeward ride was almost a race; and Percy had much ado to keep up with his own horses and their riders. When they reached the hall door again the maiden permitted Percy to hand her from the saddle, and she and her father again most enthusiastically praised the horses.

The "refection" turned out to be a substantial meal, indeed; it was served in the great hall. At the head of the board, on a raised platform or dais, sat the Earl, with the Countess on his left; the rest of the family and the guests were ranged down on both sides. Below the platform, and in order of rank and precedence, sat the retainers and American soldiers; in fact, the whole household, with the exception of those whose duty it was to serve the table, seemed to eat at the same time and place. Everything appeared fairly clean and wholesome, far more so at least than in any palaces or castles in the south of the island where the Americans had visited; still it seemed as if all the dogs belonging to the establishment were there, and they fought and snarled over scraps that were thrown them from time to time, the effect being far from agreeable from the point of observation of every sense.

The table furniture consisted of platters and tankards of silver for the use of the gentry, and of brass or pewter for the common people. Very little pottery was in use, and that only for pasties. Knives were provided for the Earl's family and guests; but "below the salt" every one was supposed to bring his own cutlery. The American troopers, who carried each his own knife, steel fork, and tin plate and dipper in his kit, brought them to the table; and great was the interest manifested by the South English in beholding their use. The fork seemed a refinement of luxury, their only substitute for which being the com-

plete implement invented some thousands of years since by Dame Nature, — namely, the thumb and finger. No table-cloth was used, fortunately; for the massive oaken board was in a condition of uncleanliness which, in the fastidious souls of the Americans, seemed nearly akin to ungodliness, after the meal was finished, and the scattered fragments of the feast were spread around.

The viands were in variety as to meats, — which consisted of roast beef from the small, polled cattle of the country, of the breed brought there eight hundred or nine hundred years before by the race which inhabited the land before the English came, this beef being very inferior to ours; mutton from the domesticated mountain sheep; rabbits baked whole; wild fowl of several kinds; and huge venison pasties made from the flesh of the "red deer," as it was called, or "stag," which was a kind of reindeer, much more sprightly and gamey than the American or European species. The drinks were the light beer of the country and a peculiarly weak, sour wine. These were used in great moderation by the people, and, as has been previously stated, intoxication was almost unknown, and counted a lasting disgrace. Sweet cakes were served after the substantial part of the repast, and a drink with them made from honey. The Doctor inquired as to the source of the sugar used, and which, as he suspected, proved to be made from a species of maple, forests of which were preserved with the utmost care, — it being counted a

crime worse than poaching to cut down or injure a tree, and the wood-rangers being empowered to slay without benefit of clergy any one caught in the act.

"There is likewise a sweet syrup obtained from the sap of the grain from which our meal is made," remarked the Earl; "but 't is of mean quality, and unused by gentle blood."

This meal appeared to be the dinner, although evidently served this day much later than was customary, owing to the interruption caused by the coming of the Americans. In the evening another was partaken of, simpler in character, and no drinks but beer accompanied the dark, coarse bread and two or three kinds of cold meats which formed the bill of fare. It may be stated here that the breakfast consisted of various kinds of fish, — such as cod, halibut, and salmon or trout, — and eggs, with bread. The drink was beer, although milk was sometimes drunk at this meal.

A dress parade was arranged by Captain Pelham, just before retreat, which was attended by the Earl and his sons, very much to their gratification. Lord Reginald remarked to his father, however: —

"This is as well as can be done by the small number of soldiers here; but if you could see the dress parade of a brigade, my Lord, with the rare music of their magnificent bands, and their splendid chargers upon the field, you would be blythely moved."

"Alas, son Reginald, I may never again behold

martial array; but I would risk my head to see yon fair army of the stranger."

Late in the evening the company sat down to a supper, served as has been described, as to food, and in fairly good time the guests retired to sleep, glad to be able to rest quietly without the certainty of the necessity of marching at an early hour of the succeeding morning.

The next day the Earl proposed a ride over the moors; and Percy insisted upon his taking the Black Owl again. The old gentleman was nothing loath, and as Lady Kate was to be of the party, she was to ride the bay, as on the day before. These three were all who composed the company, as Sir Harry had started some two hours before with the cavalry officers and Doctor Bruce, together with quite a number of the retainers of the Earl, and nearly all the American troopers, to cross the moors and fly some hawks at the fens near a bend of the river some six miles away. Captain Percy had observed that Lord Reginald had ridden off yet earlier, and he did not return until late in the day.

When they crossed the drawbridge Percy noticed that they were followed by the Earl's squire, who had charge of half-a-dozen huntsmen and grooms, one of whom bore a hawk upon his wrist. The Earl led the way toward the hills, beyond which stretched the moors, and a fen which skirted the river.

It was a delicious spring day; the frost had been but light the night before, and the air was just cool enough to be agreeable.

During the first half-hour very little was said by the Earl or Lady Kate; they were paying the closest attention to their horses, and putting them through all their paces. At last they drew up near a marshy meadow, over which light mists still brooded, although the sun was high in the heavens.

Suddenly, from the bosom of a little lake, rose a large heron, which took its way majestically over the moor.

Instantly the old Earl's eyes kindled. "Now, Kate," he cried.

"That soar-hawk, Digby," she called to one of the huntsmen, who quickly unhooded and freed the hawk upon his fist, and placed it upon Lady Kate's left wrist. The girl stroked it once, and then with a loud cry pointed out the heron, and threw the hawk into the air. The bird "bated" at once, and sailed toward the heron, which "took the air" in small, rapid spirals, and put forth all its efforts to escape, but verged away from the fens and over the broad, level moor. Then all the party but the American shook their bridles, spurred and struck their horses, dashing away at a fierce gallop to follow the course of the birds. They had gone fifty yards before Percy collected himself enough to follow them; but then he put his animal forward at a high pace and soon overtook the horses of all except the Earl and his daughter, who had such a start. The heron still circled in rising higher and higher; the hawk flying in large spirals finally got above the heron, and sud-

denly made a strong swoop downward. The heron dashed to one side and downward, escaping for the time by so close a margin that its back was evidently grazed by the hawk, for a small cloud of feathers floated away on the air.

The heron now changed its tactics, and suddenly turning, shot diagonally down and back toward the fens, coming with the speed of a cannon-ball. The hawk had not counted upon this unusual proceeding, and plainly was a bit disconcerted; but, after losing a little, regained her course, and then rapidly closed the distance between herself and the heron. The latter had now drawn so near as to be quite low over the party of riders, who drew rein and watched the flight feverishly. Again the heron began to rise in small spirals, but the hawk was now close upon him, and following upward in her rapid, graceful circles, came soon above the doomed bird; then, with another fierce swoop, she was seen to "bind to" the quarry, which was borne helplessly to the earth. The party galloped a few rods and soon "got in" on the hawk, where the "pelt" still lay quivering. The huntsman whistled for the hawk, which flew to him.

"Well flown, soar-hawk! Well struck, thou lady bird!" cried the Earl, as he rode up. And his daughter petted and caressed the young hawk, regardless of the blood which covered her head and wings, and which stained the lady's dainty hands and dress without disturbing her in the least.

"Well done for a second strike only, Digby," she exclaimed, gleefully, to the man.

"Yes, in faith, my Lady," replied he, "your little eyas will yet head the mews."

"Do you hawk in your country?" asked the maiden of Percy.

"No," he answered; "this kind of sport has been diminishing now for centuries in England, and was never much practised in America."

"I have had sport enow for to-day," said the Earl, "and will e'en return to the castle. Kate, peradventure our cousin might like to see the 'Witch's Leap' ere you return." So saying, he rode off, followed by all the retainers but Lady Kate's groom.

"What is the 'Witch's Leap'?" asked Percy, as they rode away in the opposite direction.

"A beauteous peasant girl was charged with practising witchcraft in yonder town, when I was but a babe. She fled away, and was hunted with hounds to yon crag of the river, which we shall anon see. She was brought to bay at the brink of the precipice, and threw herself over, for an' she were taken, she burned. In falling she caught, for a space, on the twig of an oak half-way down the awesome height. A pair of large sea-eagles had their eyry on the cliff. They darted out at her just as the shrieve and his men reached the brink, and the shrieve told an archer to shoot at her, for the fiend her master would not let her be dashed on the rocks below, but rather had wafted her softly downward, and she had gone

free; but the man's arrow, directed by the enemy of souls, struck the female eagle, and she drove in her death agony against the witch, who was thus pushed out so that she fell far beyond the rocks, in the deep course of the stream. But the fiend had his way, for in the guise of her lover, who was an outlaw of the forest glades, he put out in a boat from the far shore and drew her from the water, and they floated down to the Mad Sprite's Rapids, and through them unscathed they sailed where my nurse saith no man had e'er sailed alive, and she ne'er was seen more; though a belated woodman told that he met at gloaming a tall, dark churl leading a girl into the forest from the river-bank, and she weeping and laughing like she were bewitched. And all thought that 't were the fiend, dragging this witch away to far parts of the land to work her spells again. The next gloaming, was found, in the wood, the body of Sir William Darcy, the judge who had doomed her to the flame, with three gray goose shafts in him, and his horse with five. But now cometh the most wondrous of the fiend's work; for the shrieve and the archer stood together on the brink of the cliff when the arrow was shot at the girl. There had been grievous heavy rains and the earth there was soft; and all suddenly the fiend loosed the sward and marvellous many loose stones, and they slid over the crag, carrying the two men along, who were dashed on the rocks below, and covered so deep with that which fell with them that their carcasses

ne'er could be had for Christian burial. And much 't is to be feared that the enemy of souls hath their spirits yet in Purgatory; for they died unassoilzied. And the shrieve was Sir Ronald Disney, a most goodly gentleman and true knight. But the soil and stones which rushed down from the hill above to go over the cliff did so choke the runlet that flowed down there, that it broke a new way o'er the crag, and leaped from its brink to the rocks below in foam and spray, and so hath since been e'er called the 'Witch's Leap.'"

Just then a turn brought them in sight of a feathery cascade among the great forest-trees, which plunged a good two hundred feet in silvery mist to the rocky verge of the river, which here cut its way through a veritable cañon. Magnificent pines and spruces grew, gloomy and grand, on shelves of the cliff; and all about the spot where this brook flowed out from the bank, on the height above where they were, poplars and birches waved their tremulous catkins in the light breeze. Here and there stood majestic oaks; on the bank the grass was brilliantly green, and the depth of the blue of the sky was like that of Italy. Percy involuntarily drew up his horse and gazed spell-bound at the picture. His companion watched him in puzzled wonder; at last she spoke: —

"What seest thou? Art looking for the witch? Trust me, she 's ne'er been seen since that day."

Percy looked at her dreamily, and replied half unconsciously, speaking partly to her, and partly to himself, —

"I see the beautiful witch already; verily she is fit to be the nymph that should haunt such a place."

The girl looked a little vexed. "Truly I understand thee not," she said. Percy still gazed absently, enraptured by the charm of the scene before him; he was a bit of an artist, and the least bit of a poet, and as such he contemplated the beauties of Nature. Suddenly he started.

"Do you say that on this spot was perpetrated such an atrocious crime as the attempted murder of an innocent young girl?" he asked in horror.

"And heard ye not that she was a witch?" exclaimed the lady, in great surprise.

"A witch!" he rejoined in indignant contempt; "do you mean what you say? Is it possible that such vile superstitions linger even here, in this nineteenth century, with all their hideously, brutally cruel consequences? A young girl to be burned within the memory of your short life?" and he shuddered again.

The girl gazed at him, overcome by his stern and bitter mood.

"Indeed, sir," she said tremulously, "I meant not to have moved you thus. I know not what to say. Forgive me for bringing you hither;" and as she turned away she began to sob. Percy instantly recovered himself and fell into the depths of remorse.

"Forgive you! Forgive me, rather, sweet Lady, for speaking thus. Indeed, I was talking to myself, not to you; my feelings carried me away;" and he

sprang from his horse and took her hand; he felt as if he ought to kneel in the dust.

"There, there, sir!" she said, a little affrighted, and yet smiling through her tears, "pray mount your steed again, and let us ride on; I was wrong to have moved you by such a tale. I see that our ways must be different from your ways in your land. Prithee, sir, free my hand;" but she did not draw her own away. He gazed with passionate remorse and admiration in her face. She blushed scarlet, and dropped her eyes, saying in low tones, —

"I pray you let us ride on."

He mounted, and they rode slowly forward. As they passed along the edge of the crag, he detected plain indications of a landslide, which seemed to have taken place within a score of years; and the lady's story of the fiend's work was so far satisfactorily accounted for. He explained all this fully to his companion; she listened attentively but shook her head, saying,—

"Nay, then, kinsman, but you were not here, and I have held converse with many who were in body present at that time; so I cry you pardon in thinking that they must know best."

"Did any one see the fiend?" he asked.

"A tall and dark churl, to all seeming, stood near the spot where the moving mass of clay and stones broke off, and saved was he by a miracle from being hurled along with it. So 't was thought after, that he was the fiend in the shape of the churl; leastways

he was ne'er more seen, although many were near him in the confusion and affright of the happening. And Father Ambrose held that he doubtless vanished in a flash of fire and brimstone. But 't is well we rode homeward, for 't were ill courtesy to keep you longer from the noon refection; and I would fain try another gallop upon this matchless steed, the like of which ne'er touched hoof to Northumbria."

So saying, she started her horse into a canter, which she soon increased to his utmost speed. Percy had much ado to keep up with her; but after a mile of this she drew up and watched the breathing of the horses.

"By my word," she said, "they are as cold as if they had but ambled! What rare beasts! So fiery, yet so gentle; so tall and grand, yet so blythe to bestride; and so wondrous fleet! Methinks I flew but a moment since! Saint Helen speed me, but I should love this charger were he mine own!"

"He is your own, lovely Kate Percy, and therefore to keep your word, you love him. And I never wished myself a horse before," added the American youth, fervently.

"What! Thou 'rt o'er generous and o'er bold, lad!" said the girl, blushing hotly. "I prithee not speak so to me again; 't were unmaidenly in me to list to such meanings. Is it like discourse that pleasureth thy fair countrywomen? But let us forget thy last words, and so fain would I ask the meaning of thy first."

"Just this, Lady Kate Percy. I love that horse as I never loved horse before; he is a rare creature, even in America, where there are so many noble animals of his kind. He saved my life in battle. No gold could buy him; but were he a thousand times over what he is, he would, in my sight, be hardly worthy to carry you. Yet being only what he is, still I know not the horse which I had rather you would ride; so let him be your own, and when you are together speeding over the moors, give a kind thought to the one whose happiness it was to pray you to accept him as a poor gift."

His gaze was fixed upon the girl's face, throughout the time that he was speaking, with impassioned earnestness. Change after change flitted over her features, as the white clouds pass over the deep blue sky of June before the southwest wind. Her singularly beautiful eyes shone like firelight as she looked at the horses, and her look of exultant joy seemed to assure Percy that his gift would be accepted; then the eyes softened as she turned them on him with a grateful look of utter sweetness. But they soon dropped, and she said: —

"I ween I ne'er might know what to say in gratitude; but, nathless, 't were scarce fitting, I fear, that I accept such priceless offering from thee. Methinks my mother, the Countess, would deem me but o'er bold; and what think'st thou the Earl would say? Yet ne'er believe, gentle guest, that Kate Percy recks but lightly in this matter. I would fain — "

"Nay, pardon me," broke in the young man, eagerly; "leave it to me to plead with your mother and father. I am sure they will not think me presumptuous in begging your acceptance of the horse."

"Well, as you will," replied the lady, smiling and blushing.

They reached the castle in due time, and the midday meal was served, being a repetition of that of the preceding day. In the afternoon the Earl rode out with Percy to view the evolutions of the American cavalry, which took place on the moor. There was the greatest curiosity manifested by all classes of people in the strangers and their military movements, and crowds flocked from the town, while parties of gentlemen and ladies from castles and halls within ten miles were present. All these hastened to pay their respects to the Earl, and were presented to the American officers. The Doctor had accompanied the Countess and Lady Kate. When the drill was over, Pelham caused his men to take positions in skirmishing order, and thus gave the knights and gentlemen an opportunity to examine the arms, equipment, and general appearance of the troopers. The Captain and his officers walked about, explaining everything, and, notwithstanding the difficulties of the dialect, they managed to make themselves understood by their visitors, who showed throughout great gratification and courtesy. Pelham then ordered the firings to be executed, and afterward there was shooting at a target by picked men. These movements, and the

size and beauty of the horses of the officers, proved to be the points of most interest. Later in the day a dress parade in the quadrangle of the castle closed the military exhibition.

After the evening meal, followed what might be called an informal reception, at which were present many ladies and gentlemen of the neighboring nobility and gentry. The bearing and manner of these people were universally, as the Doctor remarked to Pelham, what might be denominated "aristocratic-democratic." They were quite at ease among themselves, yet there was a deference shown to superior rank, mingled with an underlying delicate personal hauteur, which occasionally showed a very ludicrous side. The Doctor heard a bit of conversation which amused him; he was standing somewhat concealed by some drapery, conversing with a lady, when a stout and testy old baron, who had been attentively observing Captain Pelham, said to Lord Reginald Percy, —

"What rank bear these men in their land?"

"That may I not expound, my Lord," was the reply; "they claim to be plain citizens, as they call themselves, or commoners; but thou seest they might be princes, and e'en their men-at-arms, yclept 'troopers,' all are as clerks. My American kinsman Percy telleth me that not a man of them all but is skilled in black-letter lore."

"Yea, truly? — this be a marvel," was the rejoinder; "yet I wonder the less that I held discourse with certain of them upon the moor, and found their

courtesy and knowledge much the like of what we see to-night in these gentlemen. If those be hinds, what must be these, their lords?"

Just then there was a movement toward the further side of the room (it was the Countess's "bower," or *salon*), and the conversation ceased. Lady Kate Percy was observed to be sitting at her harp and about to sing; Percy drew near where he could watch her, unseen himself. After touching her instrument, she played a short prelude with taste and simplicity, and sang in a very sweet contralto voice this ballad:

THE HARP AND SWORD.

"Give thee my daughter for thy bride?"
The swarthy Earl laughed loud in scorn;
"Dream'st thou that maiden of her blood
Might mate with minstrel, lowly born?

"When storms the chough the eagle's nest,"—
Again the Earl laughed loud and long,—
"I'll crown my crest with harp and lute;
Yea, sell my daughter for a song.

"Go, woo some village Queen of May,
And bear her bride to Nouvelle France;
But bend not gaze on noble maid,—
Harpstrings mean pennon were for lance."

The minstrel raised his flashing eyes
Undaunted to the dark Earl's face,
"My Lord, I tell thee stainless truth,—
If I offend, I crave thy grace,—

"And wert not for the minstrel's harp,
Forgot would be the lance's fame;
But for the poet's lyric sung,
Untold were glory, praise, or shame.

"The lute is e'er the lance's soul;
Her music lives when swords are rust.
The minstrel's song embalms the name
Of knights whose strong right arms are dust.

"And now, my Lord, for food and fire,
For courtesy and generous praise
From thee and thine, while listing there
All kindly to my humble lays.

"My deepest thanks are thine; but ere
I speak the boding word 'farewell,'
I dare to breathe a prophecy,
And blythely thus I sooth foretell.

"Thy daughter, fairest of her race,
A prince shall wed; and mark, my Lord,
Upon her lover's coat of arms
The harp shall quarter with the sword."

The minstrel parted then. The Earl
Forgot his face, and name, and lays.
The sighing maid remembered well, —
His memory haunted all her days.

And now the King, with martial mind,
Decreed a solemn tournament,
And summons to his gallant knights
Through all the land eftsoon were sent.

They gathered from South England's shires,
And many a one from Nouvelle France,
For glory and for beauteous dames
To sway a sword and break a lance.

The swarthy Earl, with arm of steel,
Did his devoir right blythe and well;
All knights went down before his lance,
Yet he sat scatheless in the selle.

Until he cried in haughty pride,
"Whate'er bold youth unhorseth me,
His prize shall be my daughter fair,
Ten thousand crowns her dowry be."

Eftsoon a champion appeared,
Of slight withal, but dauntless mien;
Upon his shield a harp and sword
Embowered in lilies pale were seen.

And when in furious course they met,
Their lances' shivers filled the air.
The stranger sat his steed like stone;
The Earl lay stretched on greensward there.

But when the Knight his visor raised,
The swarthy Earl's amazéd glance
Beheld the minstrel smiling there, —
The Minstrel-Prince of Nouvelle France!

And in the Earl's broad castle hall
Eftsoon was heard the marriage bell;
The harp and sword rose-wreathed were seen, —
And, friends, there be no more to tell.

She sang the ballad with exquisite feeling, in a minor key; the music reminded the Americans of the Irish songs as heard at the present day. The entire melody took in four verses, so that what might have been considered monotonous was agreeably varied; and the clear, simple, sweet tones of the singer, having, of course, no culture whatever, gave a most charming example of the beauty of perfectly natural singing, unvexed by conventionality. Percy, although stanchly Bostonese, actually sighed with regret when the end came.

As she finished, the young gallants crowded around and loaded her with praises and compliments, which she received gracefully; but her eye sought Percy, who leaned against a pillar near with folded arms.

Catching his glance of rapt admiration, she dropped her eyes with a slight flush of pleasure. He stepped through the throng to her side, and said in a low voice, —

"I pray you not to rise."

"By 'r Lady," she replied, laughing, "dost think me a swan-maiden, that I can sing up the sun? Fie, sir, look not on me thus. There, Lady Clara de Wyvill is to sing, and her minstrelsy surpasses mine as the throstle the raven. Listen!"

"Not for me," he replied expressively, and so it proved. He heard with secret impatience several quite mediæval ballads chanted by as many damsels, all the while longing for an end to the music so that he might renew his conversation with her; but when it was at last over, the Earl cried: —

"Come, my gallants, let us see how merrily ye 'll foot it to the measure of a dance. A hall, gentles, a hall!"

"Dost dance in thy land?" she asked demurely.

"Ah, would that I might here; but let me see the manner of your measures before I venture."

They stood a few moments watching the dance, which proved to be a sort of Virginia reel, or Roger de Coverley. Her foot and eye kept time with the music, and finally, when a young knight stepped up and, with a deep reverence, claimed her hand for a turn at it, she glanced at Percy with gay raillery.

"Thy comrades are 'venturing' with ladies fair; dost let them lead in the battle as they do in revelry?

We have a saying, 'Foremost in ladies' bower, first in fray,'" and, laughing saucily, she whirled away with her partner.

Percy watched her graceful and sprightly movements with ill-concealed annoyance, which seeing, she was moved to redouble her merry mood, until the young man, in desperation, turned to a maiden near, the same who had sung, Lady Clara de Wyvill. She accepted his invitation to dance with delight, and a triumphant glance at her less favored companions, and plainly considered herself as the temporary possessor of a lion. She was a brilliant brunette, with laughing brown eyes and her full share of beauty; and Percy discovered that she was decidedly disposed to coquettishness, — in his favor, however. In the intervals of the dance she displayed quite a conversational talent, which the young man in his frame of mind encouraged to the uttermost. At the same time he observed, with vast satisfaction, the cloud which shadowed the lovely countenance of Lady Kate Percy, who never looked at him once, but saw, all the better for that, everything that passed between him and Lady Clara.

At last the dance ended, but the "dark ladye" had no idea of abandoning her supposed conquest, and entered into a long series of questions respecting America, the most pressing of which were some concerning the beauty and raiment of the ladies. To these queries, of course, Percy returned patriotic but politic replies; all the while wishing Lady Clara

in America where she could investigate for herself, as he observed Kate Percy alone and pensive. At last he managed to excuse himself on some flimsy plea and escaped, being received by the haughty beauty whom he sought, with a kindly indifference which she thought fit to assume, much to his chagrin.

"Ah, kinsman," she said, smiling, "you 'ventured' at last, didst not? Methought I saw thee once dancing with Mistress Evelyn Gray; was 't not?"

"Not so, my Lady; since I was unhappy enough to have had you stolen away from me, I tried to drown sorrow in the liquid brown eyes of Lady Clara de Wyvill, as you probably observed."

"What! My dear Clara?" cried she, in well-dissembled surprise; "I doubt she led thee a measure, by 'r Lady, or I 'm no Percy. Nay, then, I needs must go; the Countess, my mother, beckoneth. But mark thee this, cousin," she added, with saucy significance, as she turned to go, — "remember, hap what may, that old adage which you, belike, have as well in America: 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,'" and, blushing and laughing, she ran away to where her mamma was in consultation with Lord Reginald.

The young man started at her words and manner, and fell into the absent, dreaming, "far-away" state which so often possessed him. He was in a few moments brought back to life and this world by Lord Reginald Percy, who was standing before him with an expression of surprise on his features, and saying, —

"What holds thee, cousin, in fairyland? Hath the Lady Clara bewitched thee?"

"Pardon me, my Lord," answered Percy, confusedly, "I saw no one, I heard you not — I — "

"Well, kinsman," rejoined the Baron, laughing, "since thou 'rt returned in safety and reason to Northumbria again, I have, in behalf of the Countess, my mother, a boon to ask."

"Indeed," replied Percy, "whatever it may be, it must surely be a pleasure to grant it."

"I have told my mother of the minstrelsy with which you gentlemen entertained the Prince at Windsor, some two sennights since; will it please you to give us the happiness of hearing you here?"

"Assuredly, my friend. If you will excuse me, I will at once call the gentlemen together." And Percy sought out Captain Pelham, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Tracy, his lieutenants, and then went for Dr. Bruce. The latter was possessed of a deep, rich, bass voice; Mr. Russell's was a very fair tenor, and the others good baritones. Percy had formerly served in the regiment, and the Doctor had been its surgeon; and they had formed a fine quintet, and sung much together in winter quarters the previous season. Their singing at the King's palace and at Windsor, as well as at several other places, had created the greatest excitement.

Mr. Russell directed the music, and a selection was made from German and American songs.

It would be impossible to describe the effect pro-

duced by their music. Entirely new as it was to the people among whom they were, it might be supposed that their thorough lack of education, or of comprehension of it, would have prevented a proper appreciation of the singing; but Percy says in his journal that the contrary was the case. The guests absolutely lost their self-control, and when after the astonished admiration which followed the rendering of the first two songs, the "Star-Spangled Banner" was sung, the enthusiasm broke bounds, and a genuine English hurrah made the rafters ring. More classical music seemed to be as fully enjoyed, although, of course, not so well understood; and when the Americans finished with the "Soldier's Farewell," tears in plenty from the ladies, and a kind of wild, martial murmur from the men, went beyond even the earlier and more boisterous manifestations of approbation.

The Americans were overwhelmed with invitations to visit castles, towers, and seats in the county about Ravensclyffe, but felt obliged to decline all, owing to the shortness of their leave, — to the evident great regret of their new friends.

Percy had but one more opportunity to speak to Lady Kate that night, and he then found her in a very subdued frame of mind, far more soft and gentle than she had been.

"Our guests all tarry with us this night," she said, "that they be ready for the hunt betimes, which the Earl holds in your honor on the morrow. As 't is for

me, in behalf of the Countess, to see them well bestowed, 't is meet I bid you a fair good-night, as a light refection is for gentlemen in the hall. The ladies take loving-cup here. I see the Earl awaits you. But ere you go, I give you my hand on 't that I ne'er dreamed to hear such minstrelsy as you and your friends have rung in our ears to-night. I thank you heartily, cousin," — and she extended her hand, which Percy carried respectfully, but rapturously, to his lips. "There, farewell," she said hurriedly, drawing the hand away; "I ride with you to the hunt in the morning."

"Ah, delightful!" cried Percy, "and you ride your bay?"

"Oh, yes," she replied gratefully; "but not mine; that were too much;" and as the Earl came up, she ran away.

"Come, cousin," said the Earl, "a bit of venison and a night-cup of spiced wine, and then good slumber, to rest for the morrow's hunt."

As they walked away, Percy said: —

"My Lord, I have a great favor to ask: it is that you approve of what I have done, and which cannot be undone; I have made bold to beg your daughter, who rode the bay horse to-day, to ride him henceforth as her own. Do not deny this poor boon, I pray."

"What, what, kinsman!" cried the astonished nobleman, "that were too much! Nay, nay, that may not be; how fareth a soldier without his charger?"

"My Lord, I brought three horses on this expedition. I left one at the camp; I shall never take but that one on the ship again. I value them too highly to subject them to the dangers of another long voyage, as the probability is that they would die of confinement before we should arrive at our destination. I am sorry, my Lord, to put my gifts on that ground, for I wanted the pleasure of manifesting my appreciation of the kindness and hospitality of yourself and — and your family. I shall never take those horses out of your stables; and I pray you to allow Lady Kate to accept the bay, and I meant from the first mounting of the black by yourself, that he should carry you as long as you will condescend to ride him. May that be many years!"

The Earl stopped short and turned squarely upon his guest.

"Kinsman," he said, after recovering the breath of which surprise had almost deprived him, "those horses here are worth an earl's ransom. Think me not discourteous, but how shall I find words to answer your bounty? But I see in your eyes that 't were offence if I said 'no' to you; yet look not for thanks in words, for language faileth me at need."

"My Lord, speak not so. You do me the greatest pleasure in granting what I ask."

The Earl was silent, and taking the young man's arm they entered the hall, where, after partaking of a substantial venison pasty, washed down by a cup of spiced wine, the company retired for the night.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HUNT.

Merry it is in the good green-wood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

The Lady of the Lake.

THE next morning the guests were awakened shortly after sunrise, which seemed to Percy to come immediately after he had managed to lose himself in sleep. I am of the opinion that he lay awake dreaming of Kate Percy; he confesses in his diary that he lay asleep dreaming of her. Hastily dressing and hurrying to the hall, he was received with a shout of welcome and a little raillery upon his tardiness. Breakfast was soon finished, at which he had observed the presence of several ladies in riding-dress, prominent among whom was the object of his adoration, looking as fresh as the dawn. The party, consisting of many of the young men and several ladies, then hastened out to mount for the day's sport. Percy took the first opportunity to place himself at Lady Kate's side, and found her as piquant and spicy as the brisk, frosty air; she condescended to say, however, that the music of the American gentlemen had floated

through her sleep all night, "when," she continued a bit petulantly, "I had better have been sleeping and resting in preparation for a hunt on my superb courser. For," she added gracefully, giving him her hand, "my father hath permitted me to accept your splendid gift; for the which my poor thanks are too deep to be lightly spoken, cousin."

The party had proceeded a few miles, when Lord Reginald rode up to the Captain and his fair companion, saying: —

"Kate, 't is fitting that the ladies and huntsmen await us at Holy Rill Cloisters; we will join you in two hours. Nay, pout not, my Lady; 't is of vast consequence that this be so. Kinsman, will you ride with me?"

Percy sighed at this interruption of his *tête-à-tête*, but consented with as good grace as he might; and they rode rapidly away, keeping up a good pace until they entered a dark evergreen forest, at the entrance to which, by a narrow path, he noted with surprise a mounted huntsman, evidently posted there. A quarter of a mile further on, at a turn of this path, was a second like sentry; a short distance beyond they suddenly emerged upon an open glade of most picturesque and beautiful character, having a small stream winding along a rocky bed, flashing here and there in the sunbeams, and then burying itself in the shadows of the black-green, sombre firs. A slight opening to the south showed a rocky height beyond, upon the extreme peak of which sat, like a statue,

another horseman. But what surprised Percy the most was to find this glen peopled with scores of gentlemen, some sitting their horses, some standing or reclining upon the greensward. Among them the Captain noted the guests of the preceding evening, and also several chiefs of the mountain clans in their peculiar dress; of these the most conspicuous was the Lord Dacre, or, called by his clan name, Ruval Ben-Ardlac, the same who had met Lord Reginald and his guests in the mountain passes. The party consisted of men of middle age in a few instances, but the most of them were young knights. Sir Harry Percy was engaged in excited conversation with a gentleman of striking appearance, in the centre of a group near by. All who were sitting rose when Lord Percy and his friend entered the glade, and a shout of welcome broke forth, as the whole assemblage gathered round him. Immediately the grooms holding horses moved away out of earshot, and Lord Reginald began a short address.

"My Lords and gentlemen, I wish joy to you that our purpose not only holdeth, but the execution must perforce take place with ne'er an unnecessary hour's delay."

There was a shout of approval at this. He went on: "It behooveth us to muster our array as early as may be, to be ready for their Lordships of Angus, Rothesay, and Hamilton. These be already on the march, and will reach Tweedmouth in three days' time, four thousand strong. The mountain chiefs

have lighted the fiery cross, and will join us at Caldon Hill; his Grace's vassals are in arms at Otterbourne Castle."

"Long live his Grace!" was the shout that broke forth at this; but it was immediately changed to, "Long live King Alfred! Down with Henry Plantagenet!"

"Soft, gentlemen! There might be those in the forest who are not of our party."

"But not in this assemblage, my Lord," cried a fiery young man in the front rank of the hearers, "or he ne'er might leave us with his tongue in's head."

"It may be so, Sir Gerald," replied the Baron, laughing; "but 't is best we were discreet, nor lightly betray ourselves, especially as I tell ye I have this morning news that his Lordship of Sussex, pushing fast for the North, hath reached Severn Fords, and Willoughby musters the powers of Yorkshire and North Devon to join him."

There broke forth a howl of execration at this.

"Yes, gentlemen, 't is but too true; North Devon hath but played with us, and is now in arms for Henry Plantagenet. 'T is well we meet them as they enter the fens of the White Forest, as they can scarce handle their guns in the defiles."

Then followed reports of the number of lances, archers, and arquebusiers which each man present could bring into the field. Percy noticed that the strength of the last-mentioned arm was very light in

comparison with the other two; but six cannon were apparently available. Further arrangements were completed, and then the Baron said, "And now, gentlemen, we hunt the stag to-day. The gathering place is Tweedmouth; the time, three days onward, and in a sennight I hope we be hunting the minions of Sussex through the fens of White Forest. Then we march on South London, and the tyrant's head falleth. Meanwhile let us by different paths reach Holy Rill Cloisters, where the huntsmen await us."

A wild hurza replied, but this time without words; and the concourse, separating, rode out of the glade by different ways. A horn was blown to call in the sentinels, and Percy went with Lord Reginald, by the path through which they had come.

The Captain was silently pondering over the singular meeting at which he had been an innocent, but unwilling, participant. He felt very uncomfortable, for he recollected that the Americans were in South England as the guests of the nation, or rather of the King, and it was a matter involving the highest impropriety that he, a trusted aid and friend of the American commander, should have given the sanction of his presence to a meeting of conspirators against the throne. On the other hand, he was personally the guest of the Earl of Northumberland, who was evidently a prominent member of the conspiracy, and his eldest son a leader among the plotters; and he deeply in love with the Earl's daughter! While revolving in his mind how he should express himself

on the subject to Lord Percy, the latter, who had also been ruminating, addressed him: —

"Cousin Percy, you live in, and fight for, a land of liberty; your nation's breath was first drawn in resistance to tyrants. I wish I had the politic grace with which what I would say should be broached; but I am but a blunt soldier, and may not honey my words; so I 'll e'en attack the keep at once. You are a trusted and well-beloved officer of your chief's household, and your say hath, as I know well, great weight with him. Now cometh the meat of the nut. If you will well persuade your General to make common cause with us in this our war against the tyrant, and lead his army against South London, in aid of the lords of the Western marches, who will strike at the King's main array as soon as may be after we rout Sussex, you can have what guerdon you may ask in treasure and friendship. Or, better than that, if you will all abide with us here in South England, there shall be lordships and baronies enow for every officer in your army, an earldom for yourself, a dukedom for your General. And ye shall have wives from among our fairest," added the Baron, with a keen glance at Percy. The young man flushed, and his heart for a moment beat so that he could almost hear it.

"What say you?" pursued Lord Reginald, watching him closely.

"My Lord," replied Percy, after a pause in which he collected himself to reply judiciously to the remarkable proposal, "you have made me an astound-

ing proposition. Do you think that I could listen for a moment to what would be considered, in this age of the world, a most heinous breach of international comity and — I must say it, even if it offend you — a piece of outrageous ingratitude toward those who have welcomed and sheltered us? My Lord, if we yielded to your offer, and took a part willingly in your war, we should on returning to our country be tried by court-martial for what would be held a capital national crime, and probably our higher officers, if not all of us, be shot or hanged. Such is international usage now. And as to remaining here to become barons and knights, our very army would mutiny, and refuse to follow us to such a consummation. My Lord, let this be as a dream, I beg; I pray you let me hear no more of it. Should General Vaughn know of my being present at a meeting of conspirators against the government here, I should be placed in arrest instantly, and cashiered, perhaps even executed; for he is in supreme power now, far away as we are from the jurisdiction of our President. I do not know that I should not be immediately handed over to the King for punishment. I am not sure that honor and etiquette do not demand my reporting this matter at once to General Vaughn; but be at ease as regards that, I give you my sacred word that I will guard your secret if it costs me my life."

The Baron had frowned darkly as he listened; as the Captain ended he broke forth in furious sarcasm:

"For which boon I opine I have to thank your love for my sister? Nay, you need start not and blush, foolish boy; thy cheeks be like fire. But an thou listenest to me, she is thine, and a fair earldom beside; for surely, with help from the American host, there be no doubt of our triumph. And methinks those who exist only because they destroyed tyranny in their own land, should be blythe to help their friends who struggle for the precious boon of liberty in other climes."

Percy was astounded at the discovery of his passion; he felt himself in a very bad predicament. At length he said,—

"How came you, my Lord, to suppose for a moment that such a proposal could be entertained by myself or my chief?"

"It hath been talked over much the last two sennights by our leaders; and 't was thought that you would not hesitate, like true knights and brave warriors, to help put an end to this reign of blood and cruelty, the enormities of which break forth every short while. There have been further beheadings of some of the best in the realm on Tower Hill. Now, hark ye further, and this must fire thy zeal, an thou 'rt a true man. The King meaneth to lull thy General to secure trust in his hospitality, by lavish attentions and seeming kindness. The General and high officers are to be, in good time, invited away to distant castles, each being importuned to take as large a retinue from your army as may be, in order

to weaken your array; then when the principal officers shall be far distant, they and their trains are to be treacherously assassinated, and a huge power is as treacherously to assail your camp and destroy your army. None are to be spared except those cunning in working your engines and machinery; and they will be forced to teach the use of all these and your ships, by torture if needs be, to the King's minions. Nay, start not; the time is yet far enow away for these things to be done. But the King hath sworn in secret council (I know well whereof I speak; I have a trusted friend therein), that Yuletide shall not see a living American in South England, except as slaves, and your ships and arms shall be his. Such is his plan, and such the outcome of his hospitality which you vaunt so highly. Now, on our part, we propose to make you loving friends and allies, and with guerdon for your friendship and assistance which would be worth the acceptance of princes. What say you now?"

"I say that it is for me and my escort to march without delay for our camp, to put the General on his guard, and to prepare for our defence until we can depart from such a nest of vipers as the King's adherents and loyal vassals would seem from your story to be."

"And meet his Majesty's Lieutenant upon the road, the Lord Sussex, who would overwhelm and destroy your handful of men-at-arms at a mouthful, brave

and well armed with splendid weapons as you be. Nay, then, my young knight-errant, can a score or two fight ten thousand, led on by warriors of name and skill whose honor would be forever gone if a man of you escaped?"

"But," said Percy, "they would not dare to attack us now; our destruction would cost the King dear."

"Do you suppose it would be known to your General for weeks? Meantime the King's plans for the success of his treachery could be carried out."

Percy was greatly troubled. At length he said:

"But, my Lord, we could return by the road we came; the army of Sussex takes the Norman Way."

"Ay, but know ye the mountain paths? An I let ye go now, would Ben-Ardlac help ye along? And if you escape Sussex's power, follows there not the King himself for a long distance upon the Norman Way, through the marches of Kent, before he turneth off to encounter the Western lords in West Sussex?"

"My Lord of Northumbria, or his son, would scarcely permit their guests to go unguided through the hills, or allow them to be impeded in their journey toward the camp where honor and duty call them," replied Percy, coldly. "And, my Lord, an American soldier, be his name Percy or other, holds honor and duty as his watchwords, although he talks little about them. Would you, Reginald Percy, you, who are son and heir of an earl who, I have been

assured, is the embodiment of these sentiments in this land beyond any other man (and you must inherit and bear his character after him), — would you, I say, give your sister to a man who trailed those sentiments in the dust, in destruction of his conscience and soul? I reply for you, that you would first die smiling on the rack."

The Baron turned scarlet; at length he said, "But it seemeth to me that both your interest and safety — nay, your existence — depend upon your warring against the Plantagenet; and if this be so we should be blythe to have you for friends and allies."

"It is most certain," replied the Captain, "that if we are called upon to fight for life where we were invited as guests, we shall not hesitate; nor shall we fight with the less relish that we thus help our friends to crush such a tyranny. But are you most sure, my Lord, that you 've not been misinformed in this matter?"

"I will give you proof in a few moments that will assure you," replied the Baron. "And now," he continued, coloring slightly, "I will confess that your chief knows already of the King's plot, and hath taken guard accordingly; but he hath not taxed the King with his treachery, preferring to prepare against it, and thus embarrass Henry Plantagenet. But, by Saint Edward, I understand not your scruples; in war, if I know I am to be assailed, I forestall mine enemy by falling foul of him first, if

such a thing be in the power of man. And I had thought to see you not slow to further our wishes, sin' it might comport not only both with the safety of your army and your hatred of tyranny, but with that which standeth not least in the estimation of a young gallant, the smile of his lady-love."

This repeated reference by Lord Reginald to Percy's sentiment toward his sister, embarrassed and annoyed the young man exceedingly. He was astonished at the indelicacy of the Baron in speaking as he had on the subject, the first time in angry sarcasm, but his following it up in cold blood was still more unpalatable. Was it permissible etiquette to speak thus plainly in South England?

He was intensely chagrined to find that he himself had evidently been so transparent in his manifestations. "Can it be," he thought, "that I have worn my heart so conspicuously on my sleeve as to have had the feelings recorded there read like the A B C of a child's primer? And does this man not hesitate to propose, in effect, selling his sister to a stranger in exchange for an influence which he believes would lead to actions on our part favorable to the furtherance of his own schemes?"

"My Lord," said he, at length, "I confess myself greatly surprised at your having, now three times during this conversation, spoken of a sentiment which you claim that I entertain toward Lady Kate Percy. A matter of such delicacy among us would hardly be permitted to become subject of talk in the manner

in which you have introduced it. Since, however, you have so openly spoken of this, I will frankly avow my love for your sister. I am aware that you may think it presumptuous for a simple soldier like myself to entertain such feelings toward an illustrious maiden of such exquisite loveliness and exalted rank. I never dreamed that I was betraying myself in any way, and, to tell you the truth, I was, and am, anxious to return to the castle, thank the Earl and Countess for most kind and unbounded hospitality, and bid you all farewell, returning at once to the army. I cannot endure further to entertain hopes that must, from the necessities of the case, be entirely fruitless; for I am involved in war, and expect that our armament will shortly be ready to put to sea again and proceed to the country to which we are ordered, where the fighting will be severe, and very probably end the days of many of us.

"But I desire to ask you how you knew that I encouraged such a sentiment?"

"I cry you pardon," replied the Baron, dryly, "if I have lacked courtesy in speaking of your state of mind. 'T is surely not an unusual or blameworthy thing for gallants to fall in love, especially with so fair a maiden as I must allow my sister to be. You are not the first who hath been in like case. But 't is one thing to yield heart to the charms of Kate Percy; 't is quite another to come to the wooing of the daughter of the Earl of Northumberland.

"But to answer your question as to how I knew of

your love, I will ask another, to be in fashion with you Yankees, as I have heard ye yclept; and my question is one of the proverbs of our land: 'Doth a man need a candle to see the midnight sun?'"

Percy bit his lip in deep vexation, thinking to himself that he must have been as a glass to look through; but he realized that the Baron was watching him closely, and resumed a mien as indifferent as possible.

In a few moments more the forest path turned, and they came out on an open glade by a small stream, upon the bank of which stood a long, irregular building of Gothic architecture, surrounded by high walls. In the open wood and on the meadow beyond were huntsmen, with a pack of hounds lying about or straining in the leash; while, scattered here and there, were the gentlemen composing the party which had come from the morning rendezvous in the forest. Sir Harry Percy was standing by the side of his horse, with a number of his friends, conversing with a man in the uniform of an American officer. Beyond him, in the edge of the wood, six American cavalrymen in charge of a sergeant, stood by their horses or sat upon the turf.

"Yonder are Holy Rill Cloisters," remarked the Baron, "and there wait the ladies to join the chase. Over against us standeth a gentleman from your army, with, methinks, news for you."

Percy rode forward, and the officer came to meet him. "Hallo, old man!" was the new-comer's Yankee greeting, with a hearty handshake.

"Great Jove, Warren," exclaimed Percy, "I am delighted to see you! But what brings you so unexpectedly?" he added uneasily, for the recollection of the Baron's words came to him.

"Well, the truth is —" began the officer; "but I guess we 'd better step aside, and out of hearing of others. By the way, where 's Pelham?"

"He was to have been here, having started with the ladies," replied Percy; "but don't wait for him. What 's the matter?" They stepped into the shelter of some trees, and then the officer, who was Captain Warren of the staff, told Percy the identical story which he had heard from Lord Reginald that morning. "And," continued Warren, "I have orders from the General to bring you all back as fast as possible; we shall have to stay over a day to rest our horses, which are about used up, having marched night and day, except some six hours' rest in each twenty-four. We started Friday evening. I guess we 're going to have some words, if not worse, with this modern Nero. But a friend at court has unfolded the King's benevolent purpose regarding us, and the General is fully prepared for anything. The King, by the way, required that you should be at once ordered back; he has marched, however, on short notice, to encounter the barons in insurrection in the West, and is thus compelled to postpone his quarrel with us. He 's a bloodthirsty devil; and, will you believe it, Arthur, five more noblemen's heads decorate the bridge since you left! But what 's that

horn for?" They walked back to the open, and found that the horn had been blown to call the ladies to horse.

"You will join us in the hunt to-day, Warren?" asked Percy.

"Nothing could be more to my taste," was the reply; "but we are used up, man and horse, and shall have to accept the invitation of Sir Harry Percy to go on to his father's — the Earl's — castle, which is but a few miles away; but that you know all about. Lord Reginald Percy, it seems, had been advised of our coming, and this morning sent his squire to meet us, who took us to a tower five miles back. There a jolly old knight, Sir Andrew Fullmune, whose crest is indeed a full moon, and whose corporation is of the proportion and rotundity of the earth's satellite, absolutely insisted upon filling us with venison pasty, villanous sour beer, and other savory concoctions, by way of breakfast. We had already a gigantic appetite, but it did n't come up to his expectations; he could n't be appeased until it seemed as if we must have eaten him out of house and home. But we finally succeeded in escaping, and managed to pull ourselves on our horses again. We were brought here to meet you, and now we go to the castle, where you will return when the stag is slain, I suppose. Till then, good-by," and Warren mounted and rode away with his escort, under guidance of Lord Reginald's squire.

Meanwhile the ladies had emerged from the cloister

gate mounted, and the party rode away following the huntsmen, who had started previously. Percy was near Lady Kate, but unobserved by her. She was surrounded by several young gallants, each striving for her brightest smile; but she was looking about in a preoccupied way, and returning but desultory answers to their airy nothings. Finally she drew up her horse and half turned him about, saying, in Percy's hearing, —

"'T is meet I see what hath happed to my American cousin, as he is especially our guest this day."

Just then her glance fell upon the object of her search, who spurred to her side, to be received with a smile and a slight blush; while a young knight, Sir Waldemar Tewksbury, who had thus far been the most favored, drew back with a comically rueful look, saying in a low voice to Percy as he passed him, "I envy thee good fortune, fair sir," but good-naturedly withal.

The others looked darkly at each other and the American, and rode away, either to join the admirers about the other ladies, or to come up with the huntsmen.

"The chase holdeth thee true votary, cousin?" asked the maiden.

"I may say so, my Lady," he replied, looking admiringly at her; "but this is my first experience in hunting by the side of Diana herself, who, I perceive, wears her bow to-day at her throat." For her hood,

or bonnet, was fastened at the neck by a gold brooch studded with diamonds, in shape of a long crescent.

"Nay, now, spare thy overdrawn words of courtesy and be plain with me to-day. I desire to ask of forestry sports in America. What game have you there?"

"Oh, there is nothing left of large game that is hunted in the saddle, in the eastern portions of the United States. The great plains of the West, fifteen hundred or two thousand miles from my home, are where we go for such sport."

"Blessed Saint Agnes!" broke in the damsel, "go you such distance for your hunting?"

"Not often, fair cousin. But I have hunted on these great prairies the buffalo (a kind of wild cattle), the elk, antelopes, wolves, and other animals, including even the grisly bear, perhaps the largest and fiercest animal of his kind in the world. I have seen rare sport there."

"Do your ladies follow the chase?"

"Very seldom; but I was with a party once, hunting buffalo, consisting of army officers stationed at one of our frontier posts on the plains, and two of these gentlemen's wives, young and beautiful ladies, rode as boldly as any man of us all. And one killed her buffalo too; she was in great danger beside, for the mortally wounded beast turned and gored her horse and bore him to the ground. I was, happily, close enough to her to spring off and lift her into my saddle and ride away just in time to save us

both. The buffalo was maddened and desperate, and drove us to the brink of a precipice, where we should have inevitably met our deaths but that a shot from her husband's rifle — he was close behind — finished the brute."

"What a knight-errant hast thou been? What wouldst give to have a like adventure here, saving some lady from peril, — Lady Clara de Wyvill, for example?"

"Well, it might be very romantic; but if any lady is to be saved, may she be my fair cousin, Lady Kate Percy!"

"Now, woe betide me if I care to danger myself that thou mightst fulfil thy romantic longings," replied the damsel, laughing. "But hark! There be the horn! The stag is up! Ride, Captain Percy, ride; let us be in at the death!"

And they rode indeed; Lady Kate kept her bay flying like a bird, and her escort had quite enough to do to keep by her side. They soon left the open wood, and following the cry of the hounds along its margin, at last saw the stag, a noble fellow, break from cover and dash across the moor. The rest of the hunt were farther within the forest, and the change of direction of the game brought them by a diagonal course directly after him, in the very front, and close behind the hounds. There was no conversation after this. Their great American horses easily kept in advance of all else, and they gained perceptibly on the stag, which ran a few miles across this moor and

finally entered another wood. They saw no more of him for a long time, and soon it was clear that the hounds were at fault. The huntsmen came up and whipped in young and inexperienced dogs here and there. The chase had plainly doubled, and the pack was driven back on his trail to find where he had left the old course. At last "Broad Arrow," a reliable old hound, took up the scent and led away through the wood beyond which Lord Reginald, who was now with them, said that a wide lake lay. They soon became separated again, but Percy remained with Lady Kate.

Directly the course of the chase turned again and entered heavier forest. After riding among trees and undergrowth for half a mile, they emerged suddenly on an open and high rocky point, reaching into a broad river, the Tyne. A narrow, grassy ravine, ten feet in width, led gently down to the water; this the stag had probably intended to take, but the hounds were so close that he could not check his speed, and bounded by the opening, with the dogs almost upon him. The point narrowed rapidly, and an open grove of immense oaks covered the extremity for some thirty rods.

"Aha!" cried Lady Kate, "the hunt is up! We have him! Ride on and be in at the death."

They galloped across the turf and into the wood, the chief huntsman beside them. The point ended in a high rock overhanging the river, and they could see the hounds close in on the stag, which turned

quickly at bay, and with his great horns dashed several dogs this way and that until the whole pack hung back. The yelping of the wounded beasts mingled with the bay of those yet unhurt, who were trying unsuccessfully to get at the rear of the quarry; but the land was too narrow, and one after another flew up in the air, some to fall over the precipice, victims of the terrible antlers.

"Beware, my Lady! The chase eftsoon will charge us!" shouted the huntsman, but too late. The noble brute all at once raised his head, and, seeing his human enemies, broke through the pack like a catapult, and rushed toward them. The huntsman bravely spurred his horse between the lady and the infuriated animal, which struck his steed as an avalanche might have done. The huntsman shot from his saddle and over the precipice, falling fortunately clear of rocks and into the deep water. His horse, mortally hurt, was thrown against that of Lady Kate with such force that she was torn from her seat, falling into a thicket of shrubbery; Percy narrowly escaped a like fate. The furious stag turned in full career, and, putting his head down, darted toward the maiden, who hung half stunned upon the undergrowth, like a broken flower. Percy threw himself from his saddle, dragged the girl from her entanglement, and crowded her into the rift of an immense oak which some stroke of lightning had cleft. He pressed against her to hold her out of the line of attack, himself hardly covered by the shattered trunk. The great left antler of the

brute grazed and stripped the bark from the edge of the rift, as he passed at mad speed, then caught Percy's left shoulder, ripping the coat as if it were cobweb, and, tearing skin and flesh, dashed him violently to the earth, where he lay unconscious. The stag turned again, now surrounded by the hounds, and ran toward the ravine, meeting the rest of the hunt in his course; another furious struggle with the dogs, and at last an arrow laid him low.

When Percy opened his eyes he gazed wildly upward for a moment, and then, as memory returned, a terrible dread as to the fate of the maiden struck to his heart like a knife, and he started to spring to his feet, only to fall back, dizzy with pain. When he collected himself again, some one was trying to bind the hurts on his arm and shoulder, and looking up he saw Kate Percy bending over him, doing her best to stop the flow of blood. At that instant the huntsman who had been thrown into the river rushed up, the water pouring from him, and, kneeling down, took hold deftly in aid of the maiden, who, seeing him, cried: —

"Is it thou, Annesly? More than poor thanks shall well repay the deed of this day, and joy is it to see thee unhurt; but this poor gentleman took up thy task where thou wast hurled from completing it, and, verily, I fear me he hath been sore wounded for my safety. But there soundeth the death halloo! Wind thy horn, man, as in desperate need, and get swift help to us, or this youth dieth unaided."

The man blew a long and loud blast, and in a moment several of the party, foremost of them Lord Reginald, appeared.

"Brother," cried the girl, "a leech, and quickly! Stay! Is not the American surgeon near?"

The Baron did not wait to reply, but spurred his horse madly to the party below, and returned in an instant with Dr. Bruce, who sprang from his horse and examined the injuries of the Captain. Then he arose, looking grave.

"Tell me," murmured the maiden, in a hollow voice, her face like ashes, "is yon youth dead or dying?"

"Neither, Lady," replied the Doctor; and then addressing her brother quickly, he said, "The sooner we get him to the castle the better; yet he cannot be carried on a horse, and to transport him on a litter will take too much time. How far by water —" He was interrupted by Sir Harry, who saw at once what was needed.

"Four miles runneth the river almost as flyeth the arrow. Yonder, across the stream, around the bend, dwelleth a fisherman whose boat may be swiftly rowed to Ravensclyffe;" and he spurred furiously down the slope, through the grassy ravine, and dashed into the river, which was deep and narrow. Swimming his horse across, he rode up the opposite bank and disappeared in the wood. Five minutes after a small boat, rowed swiftly by two men, came round the bend and made for the hither shore. Meantime some

saplings had been cut, fir branches laid across, and spare garments spread upon it to form a litter, upon which the injured man was laid and carried to the river bank. The Doctor got on board the boat, and helped lift Percy into it. Lord Reginald accompanied him. But one of the boatmen said respectfully:

"My Lord, methinks the boat be too small for such bulk. Look ye, she sinketh nigh to the water's edge! An a light man were in your Lordship's place, we were like to go more swift and safe to Ravensclyffe."

"True," muttered the Baron, as he saw the boat settle, "but none is here light enow, and 't were needful that one support the youth's head. Now, Kate, wouldst take my place?"

"Gladly, brother," she replied, and stepped lightly to the craft, while he sprang ashore. Percy's head was laid toward the stern, while the Doctor supported his body as best he might on boughs of fir laid in the bottom.

"Now, friar," cried the Baron, "pull for your lives! Ten broad pieces for each of ye, if at Ravensclyffe within the hour. For your lives, for your lives!"

"Gramercy, my Lord," replied the elder boatman, who was habited like a monk, "the saints and our strong arms shall shorten the hour for the Percy's sake, broad pieces or no; and yet," he muttered, "the poor cell of Saint Hubert of the Rock hath need of all the gifts of the charitable;" and they started with a stroke that promised to better his word.

Percy lay back, partly conscious for the first half-

mile, but the Doctor plied stimulants and bathed his head, and at last he opened his eyes and gazed upward at the fairest face, which looked down anxiously at him. A flush of pleasure gave the first tint of color to his cheek, as he saw where he was, and, in spite of the pain, a slight smile flickered on his lips. A look of relief passed over the maiden's features, and, blushing herself, at last she looked out over the water, but in a moment said, —

"Hast great dole, cousin?"

"Can a man near you know pain?" he replied faintly, and, with an attempt at a laugh, added, "If I remember rightly I have had an opportunity to realize the 'romantic longings' which you spoke of so scornfully this morning. But," he anxiously went on, "tell me truly, were you not hurt?"

"But a scratch or two. Speak not of that, I prithee. Be quiet and take rest, and discourse not of me."

"Yes," broke in the Doctor, dryly, smiling; "I place a ban upon your tongue. Be as patient as may be, Arthur; at this rate we shall soon be at Ravensclyffe, where we will have you to bed for a week. But be silent."

"I suppose I must," sighed Percy; "but I should like to float thus forever — "

"Bah, boy! don't be conversational, particularly in that strain, or I'll keep you in bed for two weeks," growled the Doctor, testily.

Silence ensued, and the Captain solaced himself

with sleepily watching the object of his adoration, although he might not address her. She appeared unconscious of his gaze, and observed him continually with great tenderness and anxiety in her lovely features.

The first shock having spent itself in causing temporary prostration, the health and strength of the youth began to reassert themselves, and with the reaction from the extreme weakness which had at first overcome him, the pain proportionately increased, and became hard to bear quietly. Still no sound or indication, except the drawn lines of his face and compressed lips, betrayed his suffering. His companions watched him more closely than ever. The Doctor held his wrist, and every few moments made him swallow brandy; and the lady's hand was laid timidly on his forehead. It is perhaps to be regretted that Percy should have acknowledged in his diary that her gentle demonstration gave him a thrill of delight that wrung his hurts with a fresh pang, and that, instead of the grateful smile which should have repaid her, a spasm of sharp misery crossed his face, greatly to her terror; but he laughed as soon as he could recover himself.

The course of the stream, as Sir Harry had said, was practically direct to Ravensclyffe, yet there were some slight turns. The scenery was grand and beautiful, and at any other time the American would have appreciated it. At last, after a half bend had been passed, scattered hamlets began to appear upon

the banks; the river widened to about a quarter of a mile in extent, and finally they came upon the town itself, with the castle towering on the cliff. Drawing up to a sand beach, they found a litter, with Lord Reginald, his brother, and a group of their people; and Percy was carefully lifted out and borne to the castle, where he was put in bed and his hurts dressed by Dr. Bruce, assisted somewhat by the "chirurgeon," who attended in obedience to a summons from the Earl.

It may be said here that Dr. Bruce, in the course of his investigations while in this strange country, found that while their "chirurgeons'" methods in surgery were often barbarous, and their knowledge of pathology of the crudest, yet many of their simple remedies were very efficacious; and doubtless their practice was helped by the vigorous general health of the people, who lived very much in the open air, and upon generally simple food, while the use of alcoholic drinks was at a minimum.

Captain Warren was very loath to leave Percy at Ravensclyffe, and, instead of marching as he had intended, within two days, he delayed his departure for five, hoping to be able to take his friend with him; but as orders were imperative, he felt compelled to set forward with Pelham's troop at the end of that time. Dr. Bruce, finding that Percy was in a safe condition to leave, although in no state to be moved as yet, was obliged to go also. Percy, therefore, was left with his own servant and one trusty

trooper as orderly, and the Americans marched, after ceremonious leave-taking, and greatly to the disappointment of the Earl, who had hoped to keep them for some weeks. Meanwhile, the day before they started, a striking scene occurred at Ravensclyffe. This was the departure of Lord Reginald Percy, with his brother, Sir Harry, and the whole force of their vassals fit to take the field, to join in the "rising," as it was called, the rendezvous of the army of the confederated lords being at a place not a score of miles away. The array consisted of fully five hundred men-at-arms, and about three hundred archers and arquebusiers, and although the latter served in action on foot, yet they were all mounted for the march. They also had two light pieces of artillery, called by them "hawks." These had been dismounted from the battlements of the castle, and were mounted on rude carriages, drawn by eight horses to each. Lord Percy told Pelham that it was the first time that horses were ever used for this purpose in South England, bullocks having been employed in such service heretofore. The cannoneers ran by the side, or in rear of the guns. The next day news came that the whole insurgent army had concentrated at Tweedmouth, being joined by several of the mountain clans, and had marched rapidly southward under Douglas, the Earl of Angus, in order to reach the fens of Humber and form a junction with "his Grace," who would assume supreme command. There they would await the

approach of the Earl of Sussex, who was marching against them at the head of the array of the Southern and Eastern shires.

"And who is 'his Grace'?" asked Percy, to whom the Earl had been talking freely of the operations in progress.

"Didst mark at the meeting in the forest, on the day of the hunt, a tall, dark young man, who they tell me was much in company there of my son Harry, but whose presence was purposely little noted?"

"Yes," replied Percy, "I did. He was a person of remarkable appearance, and I saw that, although none addressed him, yet all who came near regarded him with great deference."

"Even so," rejoined the Earl; "the man is Alfred Plantagenet, Duke of Egremond, second cousin of the King, and, please God, King, whom we shall crown at Westminster within the month. None nobler nor more worthy to bear sceptre than he, in all the land. And 't is his right beside; for this King's father got himself crowned, by fraud and violence, in place of his elder brother Geoffrey, grandsire of the Duke, who was a feeble man, unable to sway sword or mount a war-horse, while his usurping brother had been a bold soldier in the war with La Nouvelle France. Yet were they both sons of our great King Geoffrey; and the elder son, though of weak stature, was in mind and heart worthy his sire. But the usurper claimed and seized the crown, upon his

father's death, and was supported by many of the lords who had fought with him beyond seas. Those who gainsaid his right were after beheaded or banished, and his son hath well followed in 's footsteps."

CHAPTER VII.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

At the first sight, they have changed eyes.

The Tempest.

It had proved a difficult matter to keep Percy quietly in bed, and the day on which Dr. Bruce had departed, found him up and moving about his room. On the next he ventured downstairs to the Earl's parlor, much to the surprise and pleasure of the old gentleman, who was lonesome and uneasy, anxiously awaiting the outcome of the impending battle, and it was a great relief to have a soldier to converse with in regard to the probabilities. For the first time since the young man had been at Ravensclyffe, the Earl talked of his guest of the preceding year, the Confederate General, who had subsequently died; and Percy was invited into the library or "book-room," where the cherished volumes bequeathed to the Earl by this gentleman were deposited. He was astonished at the variety and broad range of these works. The unhappy exile had evidently been not only a scholar but a great collector of books; and the volumes covered every department of literature in several languages. The writers included almost every American and very many foreign authors. The

books were in a remarkably good condition, notwithstanding their voyages in all climates and their extensive use. Percy spent several days most delightfully in this room, and none the less so that the Lady Kate was constantly with him there, availing herself of the opportunity to read with him much that she had not been able to understand before. The only cloud over his happiness was that the days of his stay were necessarily drawing to a close, and he almost regretted the rapidity of his recovery, entailing, as it did, the coming parting from her. The somewhat satirical and coquettish vein of her manner in their earlier intercourse had given place to a gentle and sympathetic tone, and, although the imperious young lady ruled the household, so to speak, yet she put herself in a state of pupilage to him, which exhibited her in a new and yet more charming aspect than ever.

Alas for the halcyon days of life, of which the sunsets even are so beautiful, and the afterglow unfading in memory's picture!

He found himself, all too soon, so far recovered as to realize that duty and honor required his immediate setting out to rejoin the American army in camp, and decided to start on the second day succeeding the morrow.

It was late in the afternoon, as it seemed by the sun, but by the hour well into the night, when he sat alone with her in this library. He had been reading aloud from one of the American poets, but

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had closed the book and was looking out in his dreamy manner over the water, when she for the first time asked him of his plans, and regarding the destination of the fleet when they sailed. Meanwhile, as she spoke, she stepped to a table and returned with a map of the Western Continent. At the south pole she had traced very intelligently an outline of the island of South England, and the main shores of La Nouvelle France, and of all the lands then known in that part of the world. Percy noted also a light line drawn from South England up through the Atlantic, and ending at Boston in North America.

"There have I limned a way," she said, "that I might know within myself whither you would go when your ships sail again. Guess I not rightly? And so shall I be able to follow your ocean path. For it seemeth so strange to me that you go so far away in the world, having come from thence." Then, after a pause, and dropping into her pretty mediæval style, she said in a lower tone, "And wilt e'er think of thy friends left behind, or care to sail hither again?"

Percy looked at her suddenly, and then gazed out upon the sea as before. "You forget, sweet lady, — or I have not told you, — that we do not sail to our homes from here. This is the direction of our voyage;" and he traced a line northward along the west coast of South America to Mexico. "And we are at war; and, leaving the scenes of our own battlefields, we were sent around the continent's extreme verge,

to proceed to where we are to aid a friendly neighboring republic to drive the French Emperor's armies from her soil, and re-establish her own government. And it would be vain to talk of the future; for there will be fierce fighting there, and as to the fate of all or any of us, who can tell? But if I survive, and reach my home once more, do you think that anything in the world can keep me from coming again?"

"I know not," she said sadly; "when you leave our poor country, so far back in forgotten ages as it seemeth doubtless to you, and are again in your own bright and mighty land, where all is sunshine in life as in each day — but," she cried, in sudden terror, "you go not back! I bethought me not of what you did say. You go to battle again; and, alas! your wars seem so much more horrible than ours, as your land seemeth brighter and happier. Our kings war but for a summer or two, and our knights most gallantly do their devoir, and surely many be slain; but your battles last for many days, and scores of thousands are destroyed by your dread arms. I know it well, for I have heard talk much with my father your countryman, the General Routledge, who was our guest from the ship's wrack, till he died, methinks, of heartbreak, from exile. And have I read me much in these books and newspapers, of which such store was brought from the abandoned ship. Ah, me! I know that my brother was to beg you and your countrymen all to live here

and not again to tempt the seas. Why may not that be? I am sure our welcome would be for you all as long as life lasted. For blythe were we to have such guests become our countrymen. Why not this?"

"Honor and duty, Lady Percy, forbid such a course," replied Arthur, still gazing out upon the ocean, without seeing it.

A heavy, choking sigh trembled in his ears, and swept away his painfully assumed indifference. He looked at her quickly in the twilight. Her eyes were fixed upon him with an expression which haunted him while he lived; and all the cruelly repressed feeling, which he had crushed within himself until this moment, burst all restraint. He caught her hands and drew her to him, pouring out a torrent of wild love. What his words were I cannot know; his journal is silent concerning them; but when he paused, the maiden of the sixteenth century was in the arms of the man of the nineteenth, and her sobs and tears were pitiful, for I think that both felt the soon-coming sorrow of the parting, even more than the joy of the dawning of their love. He comforted her as best he might, but she wailed long over the thought of the separation. Finally, she held him off at arm's length, and gazed into his eyes with piercing earnestness.

"You will, you will be true to me," she said hurriedly. "If I dreamed that you could be so cruel, cruel, *cruel* as to forget, I would fain throw

myself from yonder cliff. I could not abide life longer than faith in you."

"And if you did," replied he, smiling, "should I find [illegible]n my coming again that I was robbed of love, hope, and my Kate, by my Kate herself? Is it well to let such thoughts and doubts have place in your spirit?"

She looked long and eagerly at him. Her look passed through and through him as it seemed, and appeared to read his very soul.

"Thou art true!" at length she exclaimed, with triumphant joy. "Somewhat within me tells it, so that I may doubt no more. But, alack, you go to battle; and while I wait, it may be for years, in cruel, long, slow, pitiless patience, as I must, nathless, you may be lying, in sunshine and in dews alike, unheeding and unknowing of all things, with a lance-point in that heart that once beat so truly for me!" And she wailed wildly again.

He managed to soothe her, and they sat silent for a space. Then she said suddenly: "But why woo you me more, until you have seen the Earl, my father? 'T is meet you ask him for his blessing on our love now. I cannot abide the suspense of feeling that there may chance any further misdoubting in this matter. Come, I lead you to him."

The young man was startled at the consideration, which had not occurred to him in his excitement, and his thoughts were tumultuously confused, as she took his hand and led him impetuously toward the

Earl's parlor. Indeed, he half held back, to try to get his ideas into some logical sequence. At which she laughed, looking up into his face, and said: — "What! faint heart? Nay, that never won yet! I warrant me you had rather face the foe, now!" she went on, with a touch of her old raillery.

He laughed in return, nervously replying, "Yes, I warrant you that I should prefer facing a battery." But then they entered the Earl's door.

She led him into the room, saying, "My Lord, Captain Percy hath a word to say to you;" and with a mischievous smile, kissing the old man as he sat by the table reading, she fled.

"Ah, cousin, thou 'rt welcome! But what aileth thee, lad? Art ill?"

"Ill at ease, my Lord;" and then he blurted out: "My Lord, I love your daughter. Will you give her to me when I come again, if the seas and shot and shell spare me?"

"What! my Kate!" ejaculated the Earl, as soon as surprise let him speak. "Give her to thee, to carry away to t' other side the world? Beshrew me, but I had other plans for her! What! give thee Kate? Doth she love thee, boy?"

"Indeed she does, my Lord. But she would hear no more from me until I had your permission to woo her."

"Ay, 't is like my Kate. But give her to a stranger from far lands? What if she pined and grieved away amid such new and different ways as

you have? Nay, never vow vows to me, lad. A boy in love would vow away his salvation to gain his wish."

The Earl began to walk the room, muttering to himself. At length he stopped and said abruptly: "I know thee for a gentleman. But tell me of thy family, thy wealth and degree in America. I would not that my daughter wed where she find herself in unhappy circumstances."

"My Lord, I will gladly be frank with you. But I pray you not think me boastful or ungracious if I tell you plainly how she would be placed as my wife."

"Go on, lad. 'T is that I asked you."

"Well, sir, you know already that we are plain republicans. All men are equal before the law. But there is a great difference in conditions, as there is here. Only, every man has a right to aspire to the highest, if he thinks he can attain it. It is somewhat so in Old England now, in this age of the world. It is the spirit of the age. Now as to myself and family. My father was a gentleman of wealth. He had been educated for and had served in the army in his youth. When the civil war broke out, he offered his services to the government, and became a general. He died at the bloody battle of Shiloh. My only brother, his eldest son, strove to raise my father when he fell from his horse, and received at the instant a bullet in his own heart. My mother, who was much younger than my father, was a very

beautiful woman, and so devoted to us as children that she seemed a child with us, in the life we led together. She never recovered from the loss of her husband and son, but died a year since, leaving my sister, a girl of fifteen, to my care. We have no near relatives. Now, sir, I hesitate to say what I must next in order to answer your questions aright. I am possessed of what, even in a rich country, is great wealth. Here, it would seem incredible fortune. Your daughter would, as my wife, live amid comforts and luxuries such as no one here dreams of, or could understand from any description. She would find herself in a society of refined elegance, and in the best position. I live in a very pleasant city, thought by our people the finest in America, although not the largest.

"And trust me, sir, the news of our discovery of your land will open a trade and an amity between our nations which will lead to frequent and steady communication. Regular lines of steamships will very soon be established between America (and indeed Europe also) and South England. That is certain and inevitable. So your daughter would not be hopelessly away from her land and home, after all.

"Our civil war is almost over. I believe that the next campaign will finish it, and the government will surely crush all opposition and re-establish the great Republic as one of the first nations of the earth, and stronger than ever.

"The position of woman is very happy in America, and your daughter would find herself, exquisitely lovely as she is, a favorite everywhere among my friends.

"Have I made myself well understood, my Lord?"

"Alack, much of it passeth my understanding, lad. But 't is not your lack, but mine. You plead well, and all pleaseth me well enow; but what of this new war in which you undertake?"

"Ah, sir, 'there 's the rub.' You know the fate of war. If I fall on the field, that drops the curtain over all. But I hope —"

"Oh, yes, boy, I know more of war than you can. That is, I am an older soldier, at least. Youth and hope walk ever hand in hand. 'T is well 't is so. Now, my son (nay, wring not my hand so hard), go and do your devoir upon the field of honor, and as soon as you may, come back here again; and if you and Kate be of like mind as to-day, you will have my blessing, and that of the Countess, who fears much, as do I, for the girl, in this unhappy land, which will either be rescued from the power of a cruel tyrant, or plunged into a war that will be worse than the old wars of the Roses, the results of which established this kingdom.

"But most sincerely hope I that you pass safe through all perils, and return here to claim my daughter's hand. For I am frank to apprise you that other considerations beside your and her wishes have moved me to consent to give her to a stranger.

I look to see, if I live long enow, your alliance with her lead to better knowledge of us, and certain and free intercourse with your nation. For I am told that your family have e'er had great power and influence in your government. I know that it would be for your own interest to bring about alliance betwixt the two nations; and certes of this land, Northumbria were first in your heart. The influence of your Republic would surely help to improve our institutions, and aid us to take a place among the nations of the earth, in accord with the 'spirit of the age,' as 't is yclept by you. My friends among the great lords of the North have been greatly moved by the visit of your fleet and army, and had not this 'rising' been ripe at this time, we should have prayed your chiefs that they visit us in Northumbria and Westmoreland, so that we might know more of the great world and its institutions as they exist to-day in England and America. These books which have come to my hands, and the life here, all too short, of your countryman, the General Routledge, have been of mighty tidings to us. In fact, what we already know hath led to the rising itself. May it prove a veritable revolution against the authority and power of a wicked king! Alas that I can myself no longer mount war horse and couch lance!

"My son told me of his unavailing essay, in that he might persuade you to pray your General that he take hand in our war. We were sore grieved that you refused this boon, but, nathless 't is to your

honor. Your reasons were just, and you must needs obey loyally your ruler's commands. But I weary you with an old man's discourse. Methinks Kate were in the book-room. Call her hither, an it please you."

Percy hastened to fulfil this mission, but said not a word of the result of his talk with the Earl. She took his hand, and he noticed that her own was quite cold. She looked at him wistfully and went into her father's room.

"Kate," said the Earl, "dost love this youth?"

"Yes, my Lord," she replied, looking down and blushing scarlet.

"Then, Kate," he rejoined seriously, "see that thou make him as good and true wife as thy mother ever was to me."

The girl, with a wild cry, flew into his arms. The father drew her to his heart as he had done when she was an infant.

"Think not, Sir Captain," he said, "but that 't is as hard to give away this maiden as 't is joyous to you to take her. And trust that, while my blessing goes with you as with her in this matter, yet 't will turn to blackest curse if ye be not ever to her as true and loving, as far as may be, in the troubles of life, as ye are this day. And now bid her a fair good-night, for 't is far on toward the morrow; and the morrow must needs be as long as we may make it, for your joy. Alack, 't is your last day with her and with us! for how long, indeed, who may tell?"

The next morning Percy called upon the Countess in her bower before she went to chapel, where she spent the greater part of her days now, praying for the safety of her sons in the impending battle. She received him kindly, but seemed not happy, only simply resigned to his wooing. Indeed, she appeared a bit querulous, saying: "Well, lad, thou wouldst make me childless, methinks, an my sons come not back from the strife. Nay, more. Thou dost ask us to take thee as a son, and then wilt take thyself away again from us and from her, to tempt the seas and the stricken field. Alas, that so many fair youths should be devoured by the sword! But, praise to the blessed Saint Agnes, thou takest her not now! I might not endure that," added the Countess, devoutly crossing herself.

Percy said in reply everything grateful and pleasant that he could think of, and that was a great deal, for the occasion inspired him; and the lady owned at last that she was not so unhappy over the betrothal. Then she dismissed him kindly, saying she must to her shrine.

The succeeding morning neither the Countess nor Lady Kate appeared at the breakfast, nor indeed did Percy see the lady of his heart until some three hours after. The Earl remarked that they were attending a special service that morning at the chapel.

"Methinks," he observed dryly to the Captain, "that my beloved Countess will one day be canonized. Such be her devotions, that they suffice for

both of us. But, sagely and justly speaking, my son, she hath that in her soul, and hath e'er borne it out in her life, that saint she is, to my thinking, already. I could wish thee no happier fate than hath mine been with her. But come with me to the book-room, Captain. I would fain have thy opinion as to a point which I debated several times, and earnestly, with thy Doctor, as thou didst ever call him, the Colonel Bruce. And now tell me how it may ever be that a chirurgeon should be with your people a man of such rank and honor. With us a leech is but a menial."

"I know it," replied Percy; "and in England, to-day, a physician is not regarded, socially, as he should be. With us, the first gentlemen study medicine at the universities, and must necessarily be men of science and the highest education. In both civil life, and in the army, they stand in the utmost respect, as they should; whereas the study of medicine and surgery is of the crudest among your leeches, and your young men of high rank would deem it beneath them to enter that profession. The rank in our service which surgeons have, is an assimilated rank, as it is called, and is decreed them in order to put them on a proper footing of equality and honor with our officers who command fighting men. Dr. Bruce's proper rank in the staff of the army is that of Major; but he received the brevet, or honorary rank of Colonel, on account of his gallant service on the field. Do I make myself understood by your Lordship?"

"Methinks I follow you as well as may be, for one entirely unused to your ways and customs. But nathless your Doctor is a wondrous wise and yet a most modest and courtly gentleman. He hath bewitched my Countess, and myself no less. Much hath he enlightened me as to the history of the world, and of thy land in particular, and hath made clear much that had been dark in these books.

"In the reading of these black-letter volumes, naught hath moved me more than the history of the wonderful settlement and growth of thy nation. And having been a soldier myself, the story of its wars hath held me many a night in summer, and most of the time in our dark months. Of those matters much discourse had I with my guest, your countryman, whom, though your enemy, you had yclept a noble gentleman, hadst known him. Of these tales, that of your war of the Revolution was most moving; and in it the deed of the traitor Benedict Arnold gave me sharp reminder of the like accursed dealings of a man in this land near a hundred years past gone. Truly, these happenings were very nearly in the same age of the world, only a few welvemonths apart, indeed.

"My father used to say that the fiend went about empting men in different parts of the earth to similar rimes at the same time. And I thought well on his when I read Arnold's story, as like to our case n the same matter.

"'T is for me to apprise you that there had been

bloody war waged for years betwixt this land and La Nouvelle France, touching an island lying in the strait between us, which they had seized, and 't was for our honor to hold. Both nations were well-nigh exhausted, and many barons had perished in the fierce battles. At last they sought aid of a people little known by us, which lived in a land stretching far to eastward of La Nouvelle France, up to the Frozen Land on the north, and down to that branch of the Warm Current which cutteth France in twain, and which maketh the south portion of their land warm and blythe to live in. This people, I opine, were much like the Muscovites in the time of the wars of the Roses, being barbarous, fierce, and of great valor in battle. The French had oft been at war with them. They would seem to be of the same race that originally came — such be the tradition — to settle these countries, and landing in the east, afterward spread west over this isle. Our fathers, however, found them here to be not so different from European peoples, and they eftsoon mingled with our English and became English themselves.

"Their Emperor was very warlike, and he sent a large array to help the French, and, for the first time in our history, a foreign army was on our soil. We were right sore beset, for they overran Cornwall, and, indeed, all the Southern shires, and had laid siege to South London. The King, Geoffrey Plantagenet, was a prince among princes, a knight of brightest honor and valor, a saint and mighty warrior in one. But

he was forced back by the power of our foes and by the disaffection of the Western lords, who joined the invader. He was, at the time of which I tell, in the heart of the land, marching with a gallant array to meet the foe, who were advancing in great strength from the West.

"The capital was defended by a knight who was approved as one of our bravest champions. He was greatly loved and trusted by the King and all the land, and had held the city for many months against a vast French army, led by the Prince of the blood. All hearts had faith that he would at last force them to raise the siege. His name, which burneth South English lips to speak, was Waldemar Fitz-Duncan, Earl of Cumberland.

"The King, meanwhile, had met the foe, and had overthrown them in a great battle, in which he completely destroyed their power. The slaughter was fearful, for he caught them unawares, betwixt the river Wye and the sea, on Merlin Moor, and not a man escaped. He then turned and marched with all haste to succor his capital, and had come within two days' march, when a knight, bloody with spurring, met him on the road with appalling tidings. The city was yet safe and valiantly defended, thanks to Saint George, and Sir Thomas Murray, the second in command, who had with skill and valor saved it from an awful doom. But Fitz-Duncan, the great Earl of Cumberland, whom all South England, with its King, loved and trusted, was foul traitor.

"How Murray came to save the city was in this wise. The summer had passed, and yet the siege lingered into the autumn, the enemy not being able to get nearer the town than to have taken the castles of the Dragon and of Windsor. The walls were stoutly defended, and it seemed as that the winter would set in before South London were reduced; in which case the French must abandon the siege and take to their shipping, for 't is not possible to fight here in the dark season. Yet their army was very great, and they were making ready for a fierce attack, while the garrison and inhabitants were worn out with watching, fighting, and famine.

"Late one night Sir Thomas, who was ill at ease, was making the rounds of the walls and towers, when, coming to a tower called St. Agnes' Gate, he was sore amazed to find not a sentinel on the walls, nor, as he hasted along, found he a man-at-arms within the space of many rods each side of the gate itself. He went down to the gate and found the portcullis up and heavy timbers set beneath it, the drawbridge ropes cut, and the bridge itself held only by a light beam, set cunningly so that lightest touch might drag it away and let the bridge fall. Instantly he scented treachery, yet spoke not aloud, but sent his squire to haste for his life to certain barons, that they bring their vassals with all speed to St. Agnes' Gate. 'And from thence,' he added, 'go fetch the noble Cumberland straightway. Tell him, or he come, we may be lost.'

"With aid of his page and a man-at-arms with him, the gate was fast bound with the cut ropes and broken chains, and the portcullis freed and dropped. He sent the page to the Lord Mayor to have the city bells rung backward, and to order all burghers to the walls; and bidding the man-at-arms fly to the next tower and see if it were properly guarded, he set himself to watch and wait at St. Agnes'. 'T was not long ere a man crept along under the wall, and stood looking at gate and portcullis. The knight stole softly down from the tower and stayed in the shadow. 'My Lord of Cumberland,' quoth the man in a low voice, 'somewhat goeth amiss. The portcullis is down and the gate well closed. What portendeth this? Doth thy plan miscarry? Nathless I have done the deed thou didst order, and the Baron Evesham's men, who should man these walls, are well across the town, far enow from return in less than an hour, were they ordered back. The French should be here in short space. But how came the way closed to them?'

"'Villain!' cried Murray, striking down the varlet, 'tell me what meaneth this dastardly crime?'

"But he had stunned the fellow, and, marry, he might not speak. So then came on the lords and men-at-arms whom Murray had sent his squire to fetch, and soon the walls were garrisoned. And thereat the bells clanged backwards, and eftsoon the Lord Mayor was seen at the head of the burghers, hastening to the defence. By the light of the torches (for 't was

a black night and a storm rising), Murray found the man to be a trusted favorite of Cumberland's, but one whom none other esteemed. He waked not from his swoon, and, marry, died ere dawn.

"But Sir Thomas Murray, with grief and dread in 's heart, called for horse, and galloped to the Earl's house on Tower Hill. And there he found the Countess bewailing, but knowing naught of what meant the trouble. When questioned, she said that short space before the Earl had with marvellous haste come into her bower and kissed her farewell, saying: 'All is lost. I ride for my life.' And then, descending to the courtyard, he galloped away alone; and she, hearing the bells, thought the town to have been taken, and that the Earl went with all speed to die in the breach, like true knight. But he, being false villain, rode to the West Gate, where he had ordered the power that should defend St. Agnes' Gate across the town, and sent them back again galore. Then he ordered this West Gate opened for him, saying he went to observe the foe's lines, and so rode away and escaped.

"Then Sir Thomas took command, and sent the heavy tidings to the King, who marched fast, hoping to surprise the enemy, and, if that might be, to take the traitor. But these finding the King's army upon them, and the season late, raised the siege, and hasting on board their ships, sailed away to Cornwall, where they passed the winter, taking the false Cumberland with them. There was yet a month while war could be waged, and the traitor was given

command of an army by the French King, and he laid waste with fire and sword the shires of Devon and West Sussex, and defeated the Sheriff of Devon in a fierce battle, even after the winter had set in. But the French King died that winter, and his son who came to the throne found his treasury empty and his people exhausted by war. So he made peace ere spring opened, and promised to withdraw his troops from South England. The traitor Cumberland was richly rewarded, although his plot for delivering the capital into the hands of the French had miscarried. But he was shunned by all honorable Frenchmen, and 't was soon rumored that he had entered a monastery.

"Meanwhile the Emperor of the Eastern barbarians, very wroth at the destruction of his army, the year before, by King Geoffrey, suddenly. invaded South England with an immense force, landing in Cornwall ere the French army had set sail, and 't was thought many of their knights joined with him.

"He defeated the Earl of Devon in two battles, and then marched on South London, which he carried by assault, the brave Sir Thomas Murray, who was still governor, being among the slain. After, he met King Geoffrey at the head of the army of his last hope, and the battle was fought nigh Dead Man's Fens. It lasted until the gloaming, and then the King, sore wounded himself, and the most part of his barons slain, was fain to flee to northward. He wandered in the forest and mountains for months,

until he could escape to Northumbria, where the Earl my grandsire, with the Northern lords, still held out against the invader. The King, who had been hunted like a wild beast all the while, and with but a faithful few of his servants, at last reached my grandsire's castle of Tynewater, and here the patriot lords of the North and West assembled their forces to strike one last despairing blow for the King and their land. They met the huge array of the Emperor at Kelpie's Ford, and the battle raged for all the day, the South English being forced back on all sides, till they were at last at bay on Holy Hill. There came a lull in the fight, and the foe could be seen bringing up fresh troops and making ready for the final attack. King Geoffrey called his barons around him, and told that he was aweary of time, unless they won that day, and he vowed to Saint George ne'er to leave the field breathing in life.

"Then came riding into the circle a tall knight in black armor, with visor down and a monk's frock and cowl over all, and spoke words of cheer to the King, saying he should taste victory and bathe his standard in the best blood of the foe, ere sunset.

"'Who then mayst thou be, fair sir?' quoth the King.

"'That may I never tell, nor show my face, until the land be purged of yon scum,' replied the stranger; 'for my vow to Saint Constance of Victory forbids. But give me leave to lead your centre, great King, and I ride to the fray ere yon cloud cross the sun.'

"'Be it thine, holy man,' replied Geoffrey, 'and let us forward in God's name.' Then fell they on the enemy. The monkish knight ne'er drew rein until black night had fallen, and the foe flying for many a league, leaving their best and bravest, amid them the Emperor's son, upon the field.

"After the victory the King marched, eftsoon, southward, retaking all the castles wrested from him by the barbarians, and fighting four mighty battles, being joined by many of his lords and people. Each was a glorious victory. The monkish knight ever disappeared after battle, and was seen no more until 't was time to fight again, when he rode into camp and was e'er the first in the attack. The King and his army began to believe him a saint come to save them; and when South London was retaken and the barbarians finally routed, with great slaughter, in the forest of Kent, Geoffrey said to the champion:

"'Holy sir, now that the invader be destroyed, may we not look to see thy face? And for guerdon for thy mighty works, I will gladly step down from off my throne, and yield it up to thee, if so my people will; for an it had not been for thee, there had been neither throne nor people to abide here now.'

"But the monkish knight answered: 'Ne'er fell words on ear sweeter than thine, O King, — that my poor essay hath saved the land. They be like water in the desert. But my reward is already too great; yet have I one boon to crave.'

"'T is thine!' cried Geoffrey; 'name it.'

"'Ye are here in your capital with your barons. Call your Parliament. Let them assemble on the morrow, such as be here, at their hall in the Minster Palace. Have a scaffold, with block, axe, and headsman, ready in front of the throne. At high noon will I enter, and will drag with me from his hiding-place the foulest villain who ever trod South England. Strike off his head then and there, at my word, O King. Such boon I crave.'

"'Your answer shall best be in the doing of your will, which I swear to do, by my hope of heaven,' replied Geoffrey, — nathless, sore wondering at such strange things.

"The unknown turned and rode away in the gloaming. They feared to follow, or to watch his path. But the King instantly had proclamation made summoning Parliament to meet on the next day; and as nigh all the barons and gentry of the realm were with the King's army, likewise the most part of the spiritual lords at the capital, on the morrow the Parliament assembled at the palace of the Minster, in the Chamber of Audience. The assemblage was far less than of old, for the nobles had so perished in the wars that but half their number were left able to wear armor. The commons were, for like cause, in no better case, and the spiritual lords, with the lower clergy, had spared nor toil nor life in the King's service, and many were dead upon the field; for they had held it a holy war.

"On that day, a half-hour ere noon, amid tolling of

bells, the Black Monks issued from their abbey on the far side of the river, in solemn procession, the Abbot at their head, and paced o'er the bridge over against the Minster Palace. Their arms were crossed on their breasts, their cowls drawn o'er their faces, their looks fixed on the ground. They marched slowly, to the dread music of the 'Chant for the Dead.' In the centre of the procession was carried a large crucifix, and behind that came a lay brother, leading by a halter around the neck a tall monk, in brown cowl and frock, who walked barefoot despite the cold,— for a light snow lay upon the earth, and chill winds blew amain. There was blood in 's footprints. His face was hid, in most part, but a gray beard hung low on his breast. He could be heard to join in the chant by the wondering multitudes who thronged streets and bridge, waiting the coming of the monkish knight, the fame of whose exploits and of the strange boon asked by him of the King, was abroad in the city.

"The dismal procession moved up the steps of the Minster Palace and into the Chamber of Audience just as the heavy bell was rung for high noon, and paced up the centre aisle still chanting. Those before the crucifix separated, forming two lines, through which the lay brother led the brown cowled monk to the scaffold and block, which was raised a hand's breadth only above the floor in front of the throne. The Abbot stepped forward and muttered the prayers for the dying over the brown monk, who

knelt; and then the monks, still chanting, slowly marched out from the hall again.

"The King was on his throne in royal ermine, the bishops in their robes, but peers and commons were in armor. All eyes were fixed upon the brown monk as he arose and faced the King, who, with peers and all, anxiously awaited the coming of the monkish knight, and marvelled much at what had happed so far.

"But the monk now spoke in the deep, well-known tones, which thrilled all who heard, as they had done in the weeks which had passed, in which they had been heard so oft in the front of battle.

"'Geoffrey Plantagenet, stainless King of South England, a wretch standeth before thee to finish his penance, demanding the fulfilment of thine oath of yestreen, — to strike off his head.'

"The King swift rose, and all the assemblage likewise.

"'Nay, noble monk and knight; this, indeed, be carrying thy mysterious penance too far!' cried Geoffrey. 'Who mayest thou be, then, who vainly imaginest thy sins to require such purging, and at my hands, who would be accounted through all years to come a monster of ungrateful cruelty didst thou hold me to my unhappy oath? And after thy saving of my kingdom? Woe is me! I fear me thou 'rt mad.'

"'Look, then,' replied the monk, and he threw off cowl and robe, which fell and left his shoulders

bare to the waist. His body was bleeding from the scourge, and from a terrible wound in the side but partly dressed.

"'I asked for the headsman's stroke. I had craved rack and stake, for none less were my desert; but torture hath done all that it can for me. I may abide no more, for even now am I dying. A lance-point found my side in the fight at Kent Forest yestermorn.

"'What! I hear no curses! Do none know me yet? Then let avowal of my name breed maledictions. A year agone I was Waldemar Fitz-Duncan, Earl of Cumberland, honored and beloved. I am, since, the blackest traitor.'

"He knelt again and laid his head on the block.

"Men shrank back as he pronounced his name. So terribly changed, so old and gray was the swart warrior of a short year before, that they with sore difficulty knew the wretched creature.

"The assemblage long held breath, and not the faintest sound broke the hush. Then the King, with white face, cast one more look of horror, execration, and pity at the wretch at the block, and signed to the headsman to go. Geoffrey himself averted his gaze, and, stepping from the throne, walked slowly, with bowed head, out of the hall; and nobles, bishops, and commons followed silently, with ne'er a glance backward at the kneeling man. My grandsire said that all faces were like ashes, in their horror.

"None, of gentle or churl's blood, looked more

that day into the hall. At midnight the Abbot and the Black Monks came again; and behold, the wretch was dead, kneeling with head on block!

"The Black Monks carried the body to Holy Hill, where he had begun his penance by saving a battle that was, up to his coming, lost. There was it laid on rocks piled high above the earth, for it was decreed that such as he might ne'er rest beneath the soil of South England; and the ravens feasted on his bones. A wall was built ten clothyards high, a furlong round about the spot, and on a huge, rough stone in the east side, which was nearest the battle-ground, were cut these words: —

"'WALDEMAR FITZ-DUNCAN, EARL OF CUMBERLAND, BARON OF SEVERNHOLME, LORD OF ACKWORTH AND FAIRLEIGH.

"'MOST GALLANTLY FOUGHT HE FOR KING AND FATHERLAND.

"'MOST ACCURSEDLY STROVE HE, WITH MIGHT AND MAIN, TO DESTROY KING AND FATHERLAND.

"'WITH SWORD AND HEART'S BLOOD SAVED HE KING AND FATHERLAND.

"'JUDGE HIM WHO MAY!'

"Then the King decreed that his name and titles be so hacked and cut out of the stone that no man might read them. They were blotted from the roll of the peerage, and 't was ordered that none living should e'er pronounce them more.

"His sequestered estates were restored to his son, because of his last great deeds, but under new and strange titles, for the very name of the shire which was his fief was stricken out of the Lord Treasurer's Book.

"His great-grandson was that Earl of Anglesea who fell, two sennights since, in battle for the King. He leaveth no heir, and the line is extinct with him."

As the Earl ended, Percy drew a long breath, and after a time said, "I do not believe that ever in the world a stranger story was told. Such circumstances as you relate must stand alone in history."

"Methinks you have the right of it," replied the old man.

At that moment the door opened and his daughter entered. The girl looked very sorrowful, and her eyes were red. She sat down near Percy, who had risen to receive her.

"Come, Kate, lass, wear not such snowy cheeks on the last days of thy lover's stay. Send him not abroad believing that thou 'lt pine away ere his return. A daughter of Percy of Northumberland should cheer her soldier who marcheth away to strike for honor and glory. So much the brighter shall flash his sword in the battle, if he seeth her smile in its shining steel, and the greener the laurel that he will lay at her feet when he shall claim his bride."

"It may be so, my Lord, so sea and battle spare him," half sobbed the maiden.

"Fie, Kate! it vexeth me to see thee thus. Pluck up heart, child. Where 's thy mother?"

"She spendeth day and night at chapel, sir, praying for my brothers, since they marched away."

"Let her pray then, first, that they do their devoir manfully, and secondly for their lives. I go to seek her."

When he had gone, Percy took the girl's hand, and sat gazing at her with too full a heart to speak at once.

"Oh," she wailed, "'t is so cruel, this parting! You go not as other ladies' true loves go, only to battle; but you go out of my world, and into many perils beyond those of war. If you survive the battle's shock, how may I know that you can e'er find your way back again to me through trackless seas and cruel ice? And when you once again look upon the fair of your land, their smiles shall look so bright to you that you cannot see the longing eyes of poor Kate Percy gazing northward through the sea mists, ever watching, waiting, for him who cometh not."

"You say truly," he replied, "that the parting is cruel. It is cruel enough and bitter enough; but I pray you not to add to its bitterness by being so unkind as to suggest that I can be so fickle as you say. I am not of those, dearest Kate, who 'protest too much;' my heart is not upon my sleeve. Indeed, it is so heavy at leaving you that it weighs upon my speech, and I can say nothing as I would

wish to say to you in the way of comfort and cheer. But surely this is not as it should be. We are young, and should display the characteristics of youth, — hope and courage. Certainly that is the best philosophy; and we shall be the happier. Now promise me, bonny Kate, that you will try to be hopeful and happy."

"I promise to make the essay," she replied, with a sigh; "but ever there sitteth at my side a dark shadow, which I may not banish."

With a mighty effort, he threw off his own depression, and taking her into the library, or "book-room," as they called it, he read from several authors, choosing the brightest and most cheery subjects. He was charming in conversation when aroused, and after a while he managed to lighten her heart and even to make her merry again. After the dinner, he walked with her along the seashore, talking of his land, and describing everything that he could think of that would be strange and interesting to her when he should carry her away to that wonderful home of his beyond the ice and the great sea. He talked so enthusiastically that she passed the afternoon as if in a delightful dream. I suspect that he did not omit all the lovemaking which the circumstances favored and demanded. 'T would have been exceedingly unlike him to have failed in this respect.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAREWELL, FAREWELL, MY OWN TRUE LOVE.

He turned his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, "Adieu for evermore,
My love!
And adieu for evermore."

Rokeby.

THE next day is referred to by Arthur Percy in his diary as the sweetest and saddest which he had ever known. Every hour was spent with Katharine Percy. The Doctor had left his second horse for the Captain's use, the same which he had had on the day of the hunt, and he rode out with her in the morning, taking wood-paths, and by her special wish they followed the river bank for some miles, visiting the spot where he had saved her from the infuriated stag. She wanted to linger here for a long time. It was a beautiful place, and a warm and lovely day. The foliage was well out, and wild flowers of many species decked the moors and meadows, or nestled in the forest dells. Very few words were spoken by either during the whole morning. At the little rocky cliff where the stag had turned at bay on that eventful day, the maiden sprang lightly from her saddle, and

sat down upon a rock by a little brook, which, leaping and tumbling down the steep descent among the trees, filled the air about with the murmur of its music. Percy of course followed her, sitting by her side. "Dame Nature," he remarked, "smiles upon our farewell hours. What mocking there is after all in this beauty!"

"I am a child of the wild-wood," she replied sadly. "I love everything about me, in forest or in meadow or in moor. But although I see the sunlight dancing so blythely on yon wavelets in the river, and hear the cries of bird on bough, and the gurgle of this rivulet over its mossy stones, and drink the breath of these flowers, yet to-day to me the brook sings a *Miserere*, the south wind's sighs are but sobbing, the birds' minstrelsy but an unending wail, the shadow hangs dark o'er the sunbeam. Well-a-day! ne'er tasted I before the like bitterness in my tears!"

"O sweet Kate," Percy said quickly, "I was wrong to set the note to a sad key. Do not let our last hours together pass in grief. Let us, rather, think on the happy time which is coming, when I return, and we part no more thereafter."

But a shadow indeed was over the poor girl which might not be dissipated; and while it seemed to be her only consolation to keep close to him every moment, yet all was but bitter-sweet to her, — and to him. It lasted so all the day, and until a late hour, when they parted for the night.

They had been with the Earl during all the earlier

part of the evening, and he had tried to rally and cheer them; but his own anxieties were heavy. Scarce a word had come since his sons and retainers had marched, and the lack of tidings seemed very strange and ominous. As for the Countess, she had redoubled her service at chapel, and was hardly visible at all.

Percy slept but little that night. The next day, after a dinner at which the Earl and Countess were both present, he prepared for immediate departure. The old nobleman and his lady had done everything possible to make his stay pleasant while he was there as a guest. But as they looked upon these things in that country, he was now regarded and parted with as a son. Nothing was neglected which could be done for his comfort and safety on the way. The Earl had caused six stout retainers, under the seneschal Eric Danbold, to be ready to escort him as far as the Ben-Ardlac country in the mountains, where the chief Ruval Ben-Ardlac, otherwise Lord Dacre, had begged him by messenger to rest for a few days at his "poor castle of Eagle's Crag," where, in the absence of the chief himself, his mother, the Lady Dacre, and his sister would most happily welcome him. There he would find guides and trusty henchmen to escort him to the confines of the White Forest on the Norman Way. Percy had accepted with thanks this courteous offer, the more gladly that his strength was by no means restored, and he was doubtful as to his ability to make the journey back to

the American camp without at least one rest by the way.

The young man found himself overcome with emotion when he tried to express his thanks for the kindness and hospitality shown him, and for the incomparably greater consideration, the gift of their daughter. He was utterly unable to say what he would have wished. The farewells were at last spoken to the Earl and the Countess and to the household, and the party set out. It consisted of the seneschal and his men, Percy's servant, the trooper left by Captain Pelham to attend him, and the Lady Kate, who proposed to ride with him some miles, with two attendants. Strange to say, he had rather that the distress of parting had been over at the castle, thinking that it would be less painful to her, as well as to him. But the maiden seemed to feel that she must be in his presence to the very last moment that it were possible, and the Earl had consented to her going. So they started away on the afternoon of a day even brighter than the preceding. They took the road along the cliff and soon entered the shade of the forest. Lady Kate ordered Eric Danbold to ride forward with his men, and to keep about a mile in advance. "And, Arthur," she said, "bid thy fellows to attend us well in front, and not to follow. I would that we may be free from their spying for the brief space left to us."

Percy was only too glad to do so, and they two rode slowly on. After a short mile had been trav-

ersed, they left the highway, or "Earl's Way" as it was called, and took to a wood-path.

"Methought," said the maiden, blushing, "that 't would be blyther to go by this road to the Heronry, where we part, than to keep the Earl's Way, e'en though 't were less distance."

The young man, riding close by her side, expressed his gratitude to her in a manner more eloquent and acceptable than spoken words could have shown. They rode slowly along through the beautiful wood, hand in hand, and for a long time silently. At last Percy, suddenly rousing himself, mentally anathematized the selfishness of his own gloomy sadness, and strove to talk brightly with her about their future prospects. But say what he would, and she listened eagerly; do what he would, and she accepted with feverish earnestness of love every attention, every touch, every caress, — yet she was too surely under a shadow which even he might not charm from her soul. And so they wound along the forest path until, all too soon, they came out in a meadow which, surrounded on all sides but one with woods, widened, in rising to higher ground, to a moor, through which ran the Earl's Way. This road entered the wood a mile or so further on, turning to the right and leading up a steep, rocky hill. At this point Eric Danbold and his party were standing about their horses or lying upon the greensward.

The maiden drew up her horse, and turned, trembling and pale, to Percy. "This is the Heronry,"

she said faintly. "Yonder awaits your train. 'T is the place and hour of our parting."

He dismounted and lifted the girl from her saddle. They sat down upon a fallen tree and gazed into each other's faces. She never took her eyes off him while they remained there, for a full hour. His words, her tears, were for each other only, — not for us to know. Finally he took off a watch, and hanging the chain about her neck, opened the case and showed her inside one cover a photograph of himself, in the other cover being an inscription. The photograph he had the day before managed cleverly to remove from a card, and to fasten it into the back of the case. The inscription had been, —

"CATHERINE TO ARTHUR,
"CHRISTMAS, 1862."

Besides these words there were these others: —

"ARTHUR TO KATE,
"YULETIDE, 1864."

"It will not be Christmas for some time yet, Kate," he said; "but I thought you would be happier to have it as a Christmas gift, as it was made to me."

The girl was overcome by wonder, joy, and grief. As soon as she could speak she said: —

"But this looketh not as the watch you showed me a sennight since, which you opened, and told me all concerning the marvellous machinery and all.

And who," she asked, a little suspiciously, "was the Catherine whose name is inscribed here?"

"My little sister," he replied. "No, this is not the watch I generally carry. Here that is. But I value that one so very much that I always take it with me. And because little Catherine Percy gave it me as a parting gift, with the best love of a sister, so now I give it to my little Kate Percy as a parting gift, with the best and dearest love of her lover.

"I had those words engraved on it yesterday, my darling, when I went down into the town for a half-hour. The goldsmith has done it well."

"Oh, Arthur," she said, holding the watch to her heart, and gazing through and through him as it seemed, "how much more is this beauteous gift to me that it hath thy face in it! Oh, how much — how is this, Eric Danbold?" she said imperiously, and turning sharply, with cheeks burning, to the intruder.

"I cry you pardon, my Lady, and you, my Lord Captain," replied Eric, who had ridden up, and sat, bonnet in hand, upon his steed; "but 't is ill crossing the Elfin's Ford after nightfall. The water be deep, the way treacherous; and yet, perchance, more ill is it in me to call you to horse away from my Lady."

"Oh, no, faithful Eric!" cried the maiden. "Go, go, Arthur! I would not you crossed that ford after nightfall, for my soul! 'T is haunted. Indeed, now I ride with thee to the ford, for I must see thee across safely."

"No, no! my darling," he said; "I could not have you abroad with only two attendants after nightfall, as you will be — " But she interrupted passionately, "I needs must and shall go with thee."

Then he replied, with a wild thrill of joy at having her longer with him, "I will consent to your going only upon one condition, — that Eric Danbold and his men-at-arms shall leave me at the ford and guard you back to the castle."

"But," said Eric, "my Lord ordered me to see his guest into the hands of Lady Dacre at Eagle's Crag."

"Eric," replied Percy, "you know that the Ben-Ardlac will have a guide at the further side of the ford to meet me. I shall be well cared for. But your young Lady must be guarded with all your strength back to Ravensclyffe. She will clear you from blame with his Lordship."

"I know you are right, my Lord Captain," replied the seneschal, dubiously; "but yet I would fain have my Lady ride back from here. The way is long, and night will be far spent ere her return. My Lord and Lady will chafe sorely, and reckon roundly with me an she ride to the ford."

"And yet will I go!" cried the maiden. "No more words, Eric. Let us set out."

The seneschal sighed at his young Lady's wilfulness, but rejoined his men, and the lovers rode on slowly for a while. Still the lady was ill at ease. Finally she said, "I prithee, let us haste. 'T is

cruelty itself that it be meet, but I fear so much that treacherous ford — and — and — the elfin who haunts it," she added, looking down, for she knew that her lover laughed at such fancies. He did smile. "My darling," he said, "I am used to real dangers."

"But now," she said wistfully, "you must be careful for my sake. Promise me with all faith that you will," she said earnestly.

"I promise you that and all else that I may, for your joy," he replied gently.

It was near to the very late twilight when they reached the ford, after a long and tiresome ride. It was on a wide stream, with rapids above and below a narrow shallow space. The forest covered the hither bank. On the other side was a wild, rocky height, up which the road wound until it was lost to sight amid huge bowlders. Their men were waiting at the water-side, and a mountaineer on a small active horse was with them. He was the guide sent to conduct Percy to the Eagle's Crag.

Kate Percy and her lover stopped at a little glade not far from the stream, and there they bid each other the last farewell.

Then he rode rapidly to the ford, and begging Danbold to return as swiftly as possible, and to have every care of the maiden, he made the seneschal and all his men handsome presents of money, shook hands with the faithful fellow, and descended with his own two men and the guide into the ford, — which was crossed safely, — and then he turned upon the

further shore. She was sitting upon her horse at the edge of the ford, gazing at him through a field-glass which he had given her. Her hat was off, her beautiful hair hung in a long rich braid, her cheeks pale as snow. He sat and looked at her until the fast falling gloaming hid her from sight. Then with a last wave of the hand, which she could just see to return, he turned and galloped rapidly from the spot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EAGLE'S CRAG.

Let foeman reck full sorely ere
He rouse the ruthless Mountain Bear
Who lightly sleeps in gloomy lair;
For when he raging wakes, — beware!
From the Battle Chant of the
Clan Ben-Ardlac.

ARTHUR PERCY dashed recklessly forward as if trying to outstrip his own misery, not speaking nor looking at anything as they sped along, till the panting of the horses on the steep-ascending mountain road admonished him to slacken the rate of speed. Then the guide rode to his side and said respectfully, but with a strange accent and in broken English:

"Pardon, my Lord, but way hard, steep, long. Horses no wind. Dey be sick, sir." Indeed, the animals were sorely distressed, and there seemed no end to the ascent. It was growing cold, too. Percy tried to open a conversation with the man, but it proved impossible for them to understand one another, and the fellow soon said again: —

"Pardon, my Lord! way steep, dark. Denault know way. Go first. My Lord no see way." Percy nodded, and the man placed himself in front.

It was time indeed, for they had entered upon a dangerous path. His horse was unused to mountain climbing, and it was all he could do to keep the animal close behind the guide's little beast, which clambered up rough places and clung to the rocks like a cat. The tall American horse stumbled ever and anon, and once on the verge of a precipice, where his rider had much ado to recover him and avoid a plunge over the brink, where the fall would have been destruction. Percy's men kept along with greater facility, for they were mounted upon native horses more used to such service.

It was midnight by the hour, when they arrived on a plateau overgrown by forest. To the left, far down, the reflection of the stars and of a faint aurora were visible in the quiet waters of a wide and apparently long lake. In turning a point of rocks they came upon a straggling village of huts, the inhabitants of which were doubtless wrapped in slumber; for, apart from the howling of dogs, there was no sound. They climbed a steep, rocky, winding ascent, with abrupt and unscalable side-walls, and suddenly emerged upon an open space of a few acres, where a tall tower stood wrapped in gloom upon the brink of a cliff. Lights, however, gleamed in two or three casements, and upon their halting at the drawbridge and the guide sounding a horn, flambeaux shone in the hands of warders, and the rattling of the chains was heard. The gates on the further side of the moat opened. The little party rode in, being

received by a man evidently of some position, who bowed low to Percy, with a welcome in extremely difficult English. The guide withdrew, being gratified with a gold-piece from the hand of the Captain, and expressing his satisfaction in most incomprehensible dialect.

The man who had come forward gave a guttural word of command to the warders at the gate, and then said to Percy, "My Lady waits to greet her guest," in good English enough, but with slow and strange intonation. The Captain dismounted, and was conducted by this seneschal, as he proved, to a large door at the base of the principal tower, which a porter opened at their approach. His conductor stopped outside and called into the hall, —

"A guest of the Ben-Ardlac seeketh hospitality. The noble Captain Arthur Percy."

After this singular announcement the official signified to Percy that he was to enter. So he stepped into the hall, which was a long, low apartment, lighted by torches in the hands of wild-looking clansmen, mostly boys of twelve to fifteen. Near the entrance stood a lady in black, of perhaps fifty years of age. She was handsome and dignified, with a melancholy air. She stepped forward with a pleasant smile and extended her hand, saying: —

"The Captain Percy is a welcome and looked-for guest of the Ben-Ardlac. May he find himself in good health and happiness as he crosseth our threshold!"

Percy took the hand and with a deep reverence kissed it, as he had observed this to be the custom of the country, and replied as became an American gentleman, adding that he hardly knew how to express his gratitude fitly for the great kindness of the Lady Dacre, as well as that of Lord Dacre her son, in favoring him with a resting-place in their castle on his way to the American camp. By an accident, he said, which lately befell him, he was rendered unfit to make the whole journey in one unbroken march.

"As 'Lady Dacre,' you address me," said the lady, mournfully. "'T is a name not used here. I was indeed the Lady Dacre once, but now I am only Helen Ben-Ardlac, widow of one chieftain and mother of another, of this brave and devoted clan who are all the vassals left to the unhappy wife and outlawed son of one of South England's noblest barons, butchered at the block by the tyrant."

"Alas! Madam," replied Percy, "I heard the sad story from your friends the Percies of Northumberland."

"Our friends the Percies!" rejoined the lady, bitterly. "Ah! our *friends* indeed! For almost a generation have our friends' lances gone to the hearts of the Ben-Ardlacs on the bloody field. And the Ben-Ardlac sword hath given Northumbria many a widow. But," she added more softly, "perhaps that may be done with and over forever. This clan of the Percies are allies, peradventure, to weld alliance to

friendship by blows struck side by side for the right to exist. For 't is come to that now for the proud Percy as well as for the poor mountaineer. But Heaven forgive me, lad! here I stand with idle words, keeping thee from food and rest, and 't is midnight, and thou a wounded man! Come with me to a bower where a simple refection is prepared; and with no more ceremony at this late hour shalt thou sup; then to rest, of which thou hast full need, I warrant me forsooth."

She gave him her hand with the grace of a princess, that he might conduct her to the bower. It was a room at the side of the hall, evidently her *salon*, so to speak. On a table was a substantial meal of venison pasty and game, bread, some preserved fruits, and the sour wine of the country as well as the light beer. There were three seats placed at table, and as they entered the room a lady who had been standing in the recess of a casement came forward, and proved to be a girl of some eighteen years. Percy did not need now to be reminded, after he had made her a gallant bow, that it was proper for him to take her hand and kiss her cheek. No young man requires more than one lesson in that line before he becomes an adept. She received his courtesy with a becoming blush. While this had been going on Lady Dacre had said, —

"My daughter, Mistress Vivienne Ben-Ardlac, hath the honor of knowing Captain Arthur Percy, of America."

She dropped a swift and graceful courtesy, and they all sat at table. He observed that the ladies ate but lightly; but he did full justice to the viands, for Percy was a veteran soldier, and never allowed his feelings to interfere with his appetite, — wise fellow. Lady Dacre plied him with questions regarding his home and country, the American army, the circumstances which had led to its presence in South England, etc., and in fact exhibited a full share of that curiosity which at once distinguishes and enhances the qualities of the sex.

The young lady said but little, but Percy noticed that she observed him closely, although with quiet self-possession and a cold eye; while he, with well-bred discrimination, took note of her appearance and manner.

She was a decided brunette, of medium height, although the slightness and lithe grace of her form made her appear taller than she was. Her hair was magnificent in mass, and in its deep, rich brown, almost black. It hung in a heavy braid, quite to her feet. Her complexion was dark and soft, and there was a rich bloom upon her cheek. Her lips were thin, and of a bright scarlet hue. The eyes were superb, and singularly changeable, at times appearing quite black, while once in a while as she looked at him quickly they turned to the fiery color which sunlight brings out in brown tourmaline.

There was an atmosphere of fascination about her which contrasted strangely with her coldness of

manner, and which puzzled him slightly. He involuntarily compared her in his mind with Kate Percy; and that consideration bringing again to his thoughts the picture which was ever latent there, he grew silent, reserved, and a bit sick at heart. Finally he mustered up courage to address her.

"Lady Kate Percy told me," he said, "that Miss Ben-Ardlac was at the school with her at the convent in La Nouvelle France. I felt almost as if I must know you instantly from the charming description of you with which she favored me, and which I now see was by no means overdrawn," he continued with a bow.

The girl smiled coldly and said: "Yes, Kate Percy and I were dear friends at the convent school. I have seen her not since our return, but have blythe remembrance of her. She is a fair and beauteous maiden," she added with a quick glance at him.

Arthur felt himself flush with pleasure. "Indeed," he said impulsively, "I found her so. I am delighted to meet any of her friends, I assure you."

The lightest shadow of a scornful smile, quickly repressed however, curled the lips of the girl. And the repast being finished, Lady Dacre said: —

"'T would be but poor hospitality to keep you longer from the bed which a man in your plight needeth sorely, fair sir. But pardon my forgetfulness; how are you recovered from the hurt received at the hunt?"

Percy looked surprised and was about to reply, but

Miss Vivienne said laughingly: "Oh, yes, we have heard of you gallantly saving the lovely Kate's life, with ne'er a thought for your own! I doubt not you had thought it a cheap price to pay for her safety."

"Indeed, I should count it an honor to place my life at the disposal of Lady Kate, or of any of her dear friends," replied Percy, in his courtly way.

"Oh, a bird hath sung to me that your words were as sweet as your deeds were dauntless, fair sir!" cried the maiden, with another queer laugh.

"But, Madam, pardon me," said Percy to Lady Dacre; "I did not reply to your kind inquiry. I find myself much recovered, although not yet entirely strong."

Percy was very glad to pledge the ladies good-night in a loving-cup, and then to go to his room, which was in the main tower. A small apartment led out of it, in which were quartered his two men.

He slept the sleep of the very weary, and dreamed all night of Kate Percy, to awaken the next morning with the sun shining brightly in his face. Upon descending to the great hall, he learned from a servant that the morning meal would be served in half an hour, and seeing neither of the ladies about, he strolled out into the courtyard, and thence over the drawbridge, which had been lowered, to the cliff in front of the castle. It was a place of surpassing wildness, and of almost frightful beauty. The cliff had a sheer descent of certainly three hundred feet, and the precipice was composed of fragments of rocks broken into every

possible shape by the erosive agencies of past and present ages. Here and there on the brink, or partway down, a cedar clung to the scant soil among the rocks, and graceful ferns clothed the ragged clefts with green. At the foot of the crag lay a sheet of water, from two to three miles in width and extending so far in both directions that the view was cut off by wooded promontories. Mountains bounded the horizon, having rugged peaks here and there rising above their distant and faint sky lines. Forest covered the rocky eminences about, except where little clearings appeared with huts in hamlets or villages.

The lake was placid and as blue as sapphire, and wooded islets lay here and there upon its surface like emeralds.

The castle itself was not large, nor very strongly built; but its situation was in a position of great natural strength, being surrounded on three sides by water, and the only way leading to the high plateau on which it stood being up a steep and narrow ravine.

Percy stood leaning against a tree, silently enjoying the prospect, and wondering if Kate were looking out upon the sea this morning, as he was upon the lake. A light step did not rouse him from his dreamy musing, and he started when a musical laugh close by his side rang in his ear.

"What spell is over our noble guest this morning, that he gazeth over lake and mountain without seeing aught of them?" asked a slightly mocking voice.

And the young man turned to greet Miss Ben-Ardlac, who looked even more witchingly beautiful in the morning light than she had appeared the preceding night.

"Indeed," he replied, laughing, "I have drunk in all the beauties of your sublime scenery, and was comparing in my mind this view of lakes and mountains with that at Ravensclyffe of ocean crags; but this is truly magnificent. I have never seen finer views in any part of the world."

"Ah, yes!" replied the girl, somewhat sadly. "You have then seen all parts of the world. To us in this island other portions of the earth are as an ice-sealed book. All in South England hail the coming of your people, hoping that you may be the heralds of a new acquaintance with other lands."

"Indeed, I wish that it may prove so," he replied; "but you know that our being here is due to a mere chance. We are at war, and ours is a warlike expedition, driven thousands of miles from our course by pitiless storms. Yet, indeed, I suspect that the importance of our fortuitous discovery of your island may be of greater moment to the world and yourselves, in its results, than the successful termination of our original attempt would have been."

"Oh, ye are at war? Yes, men are always at war. How tiresome it all is! Pray, are there not lands where there be no war?"

"Not yet, my Lady. War seems even now the normal condition, with happy and I am glad to say

ever increasing interruptions, of a large part of the world. Still, we have very few great wars. For all that, when we fight, we fight as fiercely as any people in the world; for we fight to end the war and to conquer a peace."

"Ah, then, how hateful is war! It taketh my dear brother from me so oft; and he is all I have in the world beside my mother. And we two women watch and wait for tidings from the battle till hearts wax sick as death. Lady Dacre is ever at mass in chapel now. She will pray for hours. So come you in and break your fast with me alone. I cannot feel that telling my beads will save my brother's life."

"It seems strange," said he, walking along by her side, "that you have no tidings from your army, either here or at Ravensclyffe. I should have supposed that news would have come more than once."

"Oh," she replied carelessly, "we hear that since our array moved southward, the ways and the country about the White Forest are overrun by the robber bands of the Western Lord of Pembroke! His lightly armed horsemen are out for the King. And it hath even been said that they may venture into Northumberland and the Ben-Ardlac country."

"And what is there to oppose them?" asked Percy.

"Here," she replied indifferently, "we have a score or two of old men and boys. The seneschal was left in command by my brother. The castle is

strongly situated, and would not be easily taken by a band of marauders. Concerning Ravensclyffe, you know yourself whether 't is defended against such scum or no. But I doubt they dare penetrate as far as that."

They reached the hall where the morning meal was in readiness, and notwithstanding what Miss Vivienne had said, Lady Dacre was waiting for them at the board. After the morning greetings and inquiries from his hostess as to his health, he sat at her right hand, her daughter being opposite. He glanced down the table, where, "below the salt," were seated all the available retainers or "henchmen" of the garrison, except the warders actually on the walls. They were some forty in number only, and were old men almost past bearing arms, or boys hardly old enough for service. Three bright, stout fellows, however, caught his attention. One was his guide of the preceding day, one the seneschal, and the third proved to be the steward. After the meal, the ladies excused themselves for a while, and Percy entered into conversation with the seneschal regarding the defences and strength of the garrison.

"It likes me not, my Lord," said that functionary (these people persisted in "my Lording" him, although he explained to them his rank and condition, which they evidently could not comprehend), "that Pembroke is abroad with these 'fen riders,' as they are yclept, between the Duke's array and the Northern holds. They be numerous and daring, and every

man that could be spared hath been sent away under his lord's pennon from all the Northern shires; and the mountain chieftains have all their fighting clansmen under their banners. The depths of our Ben-Ardlac country are easily defended against all South England by a handful of our mountaineers; but this castle of the chief lieth near to the borders, and to say you sooth, sir, I wot it is especially the mark of yon Lord of Pembroke, who beareth special hatred to the chief and his mother, but more to the Lady Vivienne herself, for a year last Michaelmas he asked her hand in marriage but was scornfully denied. 'T was not alone love for her, but he is seized of a part of the ancient barony of Dacre lands, and he thought to secure himself in certain possession of these if e'er the Lord Dacre (who you doubtless know is Ruval Ben-Ardlac) cometh to his own again. Pembroke is a fierce and savage baron, and hath vowed vengeance for the slight. He is the chief of the wild and lawless shire of Pembroke, which hath been for years the refuge of outlaws and desperate villains who follow his standard and have become his faithful retainers. In this war he hath declared for the King, and received full pardon and absolution for his past crimes and treasons, and fair promise of reward for his faithfulness now."

"How many think you he can bring against any one point?" asked Percy.

"I can but guess," replied the seneschal, "but his own proper vassals, some fifteen hundred strong, are

with the main army of Sussex, under Pembroke's younger brother, Sir William de Brassy, a better soldier than Pembroke himself; and though the Baron hath the King's pardon, nathless, methinks he be loath to trust his person in the power of Henry or of any of his great barons like Sussex (with many of whom he hath been on foul terms enow), until he hath earned forgiveness by something more stable than his word, which counteth not with man. He hath been under attainder half his days. But could he take the Eagle's Crag and massacre the clan, he were doing blythe service with Henry, who hath sworn to root us and all mountain clans out with fire and sword. So he is himself marauding with his cut-throats. I hear his following be two to three hundred. But here cometh my young mistress. Methinks she seeketh thee, my Lord."

In this the worthy seneschal was right, for the fair Vivienne, who had entered the hall, walked down to where Percy was standing.

CHAPTER X.

THE DELL OF THE SWAN MAIDEN.

So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

The Lady of the Lake.

THE young lady stopped for a moment to ask a question of a servant in a tongue entirely strange to Percy, and then approaching him, said: —

"I scarce know how to entertain our noble guest. A ride to yon mountain might pleasure a well and strong man, which Captain Percy could hardly yet, methinks, be accounted; but 't is a perilously tiresome way. And moreover, we hear this morn that the marauders of Pembroke are nearer than we thought, and hence the mountain is scarce a safe place for pleasuring. In fact, sir, while my mother and I would be greatly honored by your remaining our guest for a time to which it were ungracious to set limit, I know your impatience to be gone, and were the ways fairly safe, we should feel it as unkind to you to detain you, as it would be to ourselves to bid you farewell; but as things are, we might not dream of letting you depart, for the roads southward are in possession of the fell Pembroke's villains, and your young life would not be an hour older should

you fall into his hands. So you must e'en be content to abide at our poor house till happier days."

"Miss Ben-Ardlac must not speak of the time when I may leave this most hospitable castle as a 'happier day,'" said Percy, "for I can but part from so kind and lovely entertaining with sincere regret; but really, if there be the slightest chance of my getting through their bands and pushing for the camp, I must do so, for my duty is imperative."

"I can but assure you again that it is utterly impossible," said the girl, coldly. "And as you must accept the unpleasant truth, would it not be as well to be as content as you may under the trial? To try to make the period of your imprisonment here to pass the less heavily, will you walk with me to the Dell of the Swan Maiden, where the view over the lake is most agreeable, and from which the cloisters of St. Helen's are to be seen, near to the Caldon Hill?"

Percy was most happy to accompany his fair guide, and they started on the walk. "Lady Kate Percy," said he, "has told me of the romantic legend of the Swan Maiden's Dell, — how an ancestor of yours wedded a fair lady who proved to be a swan maiden, and so one night when walking with him at the dell, where she had been singing her siren songs, and had been answered by her companion nymphs from the bosom of the lake, she suddenly became invisible, and disappeared forever, only appearing to him afterward in dreams."

"Did Kate Percy tell thee this as truth, to which she verily gave credence?" asked the maiden, her lip curling in pretty scorn.

"Most certainly she believed what she said," replied Percy, his face flushing with a look of indignant protest. The girl still looked at him with piercing eyes, the scorn deepening on her thin lips; but after reading his expression, — and him, — she dropped her gaze, to raise again the eyes in humble and beseeching gentleness, and with a sad smile.

"I see," she murmured in an almost inaudible voice; then aloud: "Sweet Kate is so simple and true, and hath faith in all that is told her by old nurses, — ay, and by young men too, I ween," she added, again almost inaudibly.

There was something about this girl from which Percy instinctively shrank. Yet her manner had in it that which he could not fathom, of such inexpressible fascination that he felt himself being slowly drawn under the spell. From this moment she never again showed any of the cold, delicately contemptuous reserve which had impressed him since he first saw her. In all which she said thereafter of Kate Percy, there was an apparently warm and generous feeling of friendship and affection which completely disarmed him; and she exerted herself in every way to interest and attract him.

They walked on and on through the wood, and when they were near a mile from the castle, she led the way off to the left, through a dark, woody ravine

which all at once widened to a little glade, the most lovely that Percy had ever seen. The cliffs broke away here for a few rods, and the land sloped down to a sandy beach bordered on each side by an immensely high and steep ledge, moss-grown and covered with rich green hardy ferns. The evergreens shut in this lovely spot at the entrance and sides as by a living wall, while here and there on the velvety greensward were noble oaks. Partially concealed on one side by a huge mass of porphyritic rock, was a little half-ruined shrine, before which grew several graceful birches, their catkins hanging heavy and tremulous in golden yellow, and surrounded by a cloud of bees, of a species different from any known to our entomology. The music of their loud hum was plainly in different keys, and more oddly harmonious than anything of the kind which Percy had ever heard.

The lake stretched away in front in a deep, transparent, unruffled blue. Rocky, wooded islets lay here and there, doubled in their own reflection in the pellucid depths. In the far distance were dim, purple mountains, and on one of the nearest foot-hills were visible, as if seen through mist, the towers and spires of a monastic pile. A darkly wooded hill lay just to the left of it.

The maiden cast a look of exultant pride on him as he drank in the exquisite beauties of the spot.

"This is the Swan Maiden's Dell," she said, "and those be the Islands of the Three Spirits. Our ances-

tors thought them haunted. Our tribesmen of to-day still credit the legend. They ne'er set foot on them willingly. I have wandered o'er all, nathless, and scatheless, — perchance because I am of the blood of the Swan Maiden," she added simply, looking at him with a weird expression, which in spite of himself caused a cold chill to creep over him.

"Yonder," she continued, "be the cloisters of St. Helen's. The height beyond is the famed Caldon Hill."

"I have heard tales about that hill," he said. "It was there, I believe, that one who had betrayed his king and native land began his penance for the crime by winning a lost battle."

"Nay," she replied, "that is scarcely so. The battle was on Holy Hill, which is hard by St. Helen's, on the far side, though in good sooth not so distant from Caldon's Edge. But a battle was fought on Caldon two hundred years agone, which the minstrels have sung of to harp and lute. Wouldst like to listen to a ballad concerning it?"

"Oh, so very much!" he replied earnestly. "I shall be more than delighted to hear you sing it."

"'T is but simple and rude, and very old," she said. "I will sing it; but first let me tell thee the true tale as to my ancestress called the Swan Maiden.

"My great grandsire, the fourth Baron Dacre of Heronburn, was a dark and gloomy man, no longer young at the period of which I discourse. Tradition

saith that he dabbled in the Black Art. Be that as it may, he late wedded a lady of less than half his years, the daughter of Sir Garth Halcro of Otterbank, with whom my ancestor had been for years at feud. Howe'er, he had encountered this girl at a friend's castle, and soon after asked her in marriage of Sir Garth. This seemed like a reconciliation, and Sir Garth, who was far the weaker baron, was only too glad to secure lasting peace with his powerful enemy by consenting to his wish. The lady, too, was nothing loath, Baron Dacre being a handsome and courtly man. After taking his bride home, however, the Baron gave out that he wished to see none of her kindred at his castle; and being hereditary chieftain of the Ben-Ardlac mountain tribe, he withdrew with his lady to this tower, where he still pursued his dealings with the necromancer, who was a magician from the Eastern barbarians' country beyond La Nouvelle France. This man ever dwelt in yonder turret next the lake, as one goeth into the castle, called to this day the Wizard's Tower.

"His bride was thus kept aloof from her own family, and mourned much the grief of separation from her twin brother, who was marvellous well versed in minstrelsy, and whose singing was like heavenly music. So was her own forsooth, and much they had enjoyed most blythely together which was now denied them. The lady bore her lord two beautiful children, but saw less and yet less of him, as he spent the most of his life in dark work with the

magician. But the lady went on in her course, like as did he in his own, and one day it was whispered to him that on every Friday, early in the day, she went from the castle, and returned not until the gloaming. Then somewhat more heavy reached his ears, that so weighed down his soul that betimes one Friday morn he hied him soft to her chamber and concealed himself behind the arras nigh to the casement, which was so high in the wall that while it let in light enow, she might not peer out. But a large steel mirror hung in such manner nigh this casement, that one might fairly see what passed without, e'en upon the farther side o' the lake, where it narroweth as you may see to scarce a mile, by reason of the point which maketh out toward us here. So then the lady entering from her bower gazed upon the mirror, and likewise from behind the arras opposite gazed her lord.

"Eftsoon he beheld the reflection of a knight upon yon point, who rode down to the water side, and leaving his horse in the wood, embarked himself in a skiff which two stout varlets pulled to the west side of the islets till they might be no longer seen of those in the castle. And so Lord Dacre beheld no more of them. But his lady, running, did array herself all in white samite, and her robe was bedight with swan's-down about the neck, and up and down the breast. And her heavy hair, which while she gazed in the mirror had shrouded her form, hanging to the floor (for she had the locks of dark, massive,

long tresses which yet pertain to our race), she deftly and quickly rolled up in braids, and throwing a mantle over all, she did haste out of the postern and into this wood. Her lord followed her as closely as he might without betraying himself, and soon she came to this dell; and behold in the skiff, coming by that time to land, sat the knight, a young man of near her own age, with a lute in 's hand. And he came on shore, the rowers pulling off again to the nighest islet, where they awaited his pleasure. He met the Lady Dacre with an embrace and much kissing, and they sat them down and did sing like to angels, to the lute, all the day until nightfall, when with embrace and kiss again she left him, to steal through the forest back to the castle. But the Lord Dacre, who had been raging to himself all the day, hidden mid the trees, and yet despite his rage charmed with their minstrelsy as the bird is charmed to his undoing by the snake, burst from his hiding-place when the lady was gone, and bid the knight draw for a false villain. And the knight making as if he would have spoken, and drawing not, the Baron laid him as he thought dead with a blow of his dagger, and left him to the ravens, striding home again meditating that he might do to the false wife.

"But he was a dark and cold man, and seldom struck in hot blood. And he ne'er spoke word to her, but planned a revenge that should wear her soul to madness ere he had her further punished; for he could burn her by the law of the realm. She

slept that night in peace; but next morn when she awoke she, terrified, saw her own face reflected in a great steel mirror which was bound to the foot of her couch inside the curtains. At first she dreamed not what it might portend; but rising, she saw all about the room mirrors, wherein her face looked back at her from every side. She went to her bower and 't was even so there. With leaden heart she descended to the hall to break her fast; and making her respectful greeting to her lord, he ne'er replied to her, nor ate while she remained, but sat with cold eyes fixed upon her ever, ne'er looking elsewhere for an instant. But what terrified her sore was a large steel mirror fixed at the board so as to give back her own sweetly haggard face whene'er she glanced upward. Thus eating but a morsel, she fled again to her bower, and called to her maidens to bring her children to her. But they answered her not, nor brought the babes, trembling when she adjured them to speak; but no word spoke they, being forbid by the dark Baron. Thus stayed she all the long day in her own bower alone; and when the night came once more and she at last crept into her wretched couch, the mirror was there, and two servants came and held torches through the night, flaring into the mirror and on her, so that she might not open her eyes without seeing her own face staring at her.

"'T were an o'er long tale, and dolorous in the telling, to give you the tidings of all that week of woe; but each day was like the last. She boded heavily on

what it all betokened, and yet when the Friday came once more, she looked again in the mirror by the casement, and again arrayed herself in white samite, and again stole from the postern; and her lord again followed unseen, to taste of the cruel joy of beholding her despair when she found her lover's dead corpse there in the dell. But Lord Dacre was confounded, for no corpse was there; and he wist not that he had not slain but only sore wounded the knight, whose servants came with the boat and bore him across to St. Helen's, where he was tenderly nursed.

"But the lady waited in despair indeed until near nightfall. Then she sat her down by the lake shore and sang the death-song of the swan. And behold, when she came to the last verse, a swan, floating on the bosom of the lake in the latest ray of sunset, seemed to the Lord Dacre to take up the strain and finish the lay. Sorely wondering and ill at ease, he followed the lady as she, spent with fasting and the misery of the days gone by, crept slowly up the dell and into the shadows of the gloaming, which was fast falling upon the world. He o'ertook .her as she reached the high land mid the oaks. She gave a low shriek as he confronted her like a dark spirit. He seized her arm fiercely and hissed betwixt his teeth, 'Who was thy lover?'

"'What meanest thou?' she said faintly; and then, rising to her height as she drank in his intent, said haughtily, 'How darest thou so shamefully wrong me, my Lord?'

"'Who, then,' he screamed, 'is the knight who met thee in the dell a sennight agone?'

"'My brother, Lord Dacre,' she cried loudly, and he fancied her voice to sound like the swan's death-song as she stood there, her robe of white samite gleaming in the dim light. He unhanded her and staggered back against a tree, catching his breath as if strangling, and beating his breast. As he gazed in awful remorse at the misty white form, it suddenly faded away; for she had loosed the braids of her dark hair, and it had fallen over her white robe like a pall. He started forward and snatched at thin air. She was gone! He dashed down the path to the dell. She was not there. He flew to the castle. She had not been there. He ordered out every retainer with torches, and scoured the forest till dawn. But no trace of her found they. And the Baron went half mad. The memories o'erwhelmed his mind of his neglect of her, his cold absence with his Black Art; of his cruel behest that she should see none of her kindred (yet he had done naught to take the place of her kindred in her heart); of his almost forgetfulness of the being of his children. He sent for these infants again, — for he had despatched them away when he thought her unfaithful. But he could endure not to see the little things; they reminded him, to his heart's death, of her. He offered great reward to whosoever might find and bring her back, — sending, moreover, to her father's castle his tidings of her flight, and of his own remorse and

misery, and urging that her babes mourned for her at the Eagle's Crag.

"But he ne'er slept all the days and nights, and grew more and more wild. At last one of his messengers craved lodging for the night at St. Helen's Cloisters; and here was the lady, who had found her brother there, sore wounded but mending.

"Then she and he learned the unhappy chance which had caused the misery, and that the Lord Dacre was not altogether to be condemned for the mistake which had led to his violence. And she hastened back to the Eagle's Crag, to clasp her children to her heart, and to forgive her husband and try to lighten his remorse. But for this last 't was too late. The Lord Dacre was crazed. He was all tenderness to his babes, whom he ne'er could bear out of his sight, but he ne'er seemed to see her. His eyes rested upon her as if blind; or if perchance he sometime saw her, he deemed her a spirit, believing her dead; and then he ever fell on his knees in worship of the soul of his Swan Maiden as he called her,— harmlessly raving. Her caresses, her loving care, either seemed to him as the kisses of the summer wind, or the airy tenderness of a loving ghost. And thus fared matters for a year and a sennight, the Baron ne'er being well enow in 's mind to be made to believe that the Lady Ida, or her brother whom he had struck down, still lived. Though the brother had come to Eagle's Crag, and was reconciled in his heart to Lord Dacre, yet my ancestor ne'er knew him for one whom he had e'er seen.

"The Baron, thuswhile, had been unable to take part in the war which the good King Geoffrey was waging against the French, and erst the barbarians, for his life and throne and the freedom of South England; and at this hour the King was wandering in the forests of the North with few friends, — his barons mostly dead, his armies destroyed, and 't was finally at the Eagle's Crag that he sought refuge. The instant that my ancestor beheld him a shock seemed to arouse his brain, and he knew the King; and right joyous welcome gave he him and his poor array. And 't was here that the Northern barons rallied their strength again; and Lord Dacre called out his vassals, and the Clan Ben-Ardlac and the Earl of Northumberland with the Scottish lords coming with their array, the King marched to Holy Hill where he gave battle to the invader, and 't was there, as thou knowest, that the aforetime traitor Fitz-Duncan saved the lost battle by his desperate bravery and skill. But my great-grandsire, who fought valiantly and like his old self in the fray, was mortally wounded late in the day, and was borne to the cloisters of St. Helen's, where he had sent for asylum, in case the day went against the South English, the Lady Ida and his children; for he had begun, as a man coming out of a dream, to realize, before he marched away from Eagle's Crag, that his wife was still alive and with him.

"Albeit, as he lay dying at St. Helen's, his mind cleared, and he knew her again; and for the forty

days that life stayed in his body, although he suffered sore pain, yet he and the Lady Ida were happier than e'er before in the days gone by; and her heart broke when he died, so that the Swan Maiden ne'er smiled more.

"And this is the true tale, which hath been so mistold that distempered minds have made mystery and magic out of simple truth."

Percy had listened intently to this story, which was very simply told, but in a style partaking singularly of, and corresponding with, the strange and inexplicable fascination which seemed a component part of this girl, surrounding her as with an atmospheric mist of subtle psychical aroma, which reminded her companion of certain exquisitely delicate East Indian perfumes which one feels instinctively that it would be safe not to inhale. He was perfectly well aware of the influence which this fascination was gaining over him. He studied it coldly and curiously, but yielded to it nevertheless; and she doubtless knew this. He had kept his eyes on her countenance all through the recital, watching its changes of expression and the art of her graceful mobility of feature. She had never once taken her gaze from his face; and now, leaning forward with a weird smile, while the fiery brown tourmaline color kindled in her hitherto deeply black eyes, she said in low tones, which seemed to him like a prelude played pianissimo upon harpstrings: —

"Would it now pleasure you to hear the ballad

of Caldon Hill? It giveth the manner of our mountain minstrelsy, e'en though it may seem wild and rude to thy gently trained apprehension."

"Yes," he replied simply and dreamily, looking at her with half-closed eyes, but with an earnestness in the half-audible reply that made the lady's lip to curl with a faint smile of consciousness of the swiftly increasing power of her spell. Percy perfectly well comprehended all this too, and still let himself float on.

She rose apparently without effort, and stood half facing the lake. Her left arm nearest him was laid with careless grace upon the bole of a birch, of which the dead white bark formed a foil for the dazzling white of the half-bare arm, upon which was wound from wrist to elbow a bracelet of ruddy gold in the shape of a swan's neck and head, with ruby eyes. Strange to say, Percy had not before noticed her dress, and could not for his life have described it until now, when it all at once came to him that it was of an airy appearing white material, trimmed exclusively with swan's-down.

Of this elegant substance was also the mantle thrown about her neck and shoulders, — for the air was none too warm. She wore upon her head a sort of hat with much swan's-down on it, and a bunch of long, pure white feathers on one side.

"Surely," thought the young man to himself, "if the girl has followed her natural instinct in arraying herself, she must be a swan maiden indeed."

She began to sing in a rich, penetrating soprano, throwing her voice out upon the lake, so that Percy could not free himself from the impression that the notes floated away over the water toward a group of wild swans, which soon began to bend their graceful necks in the direction of the singer. Finally they turned and slowly drew near. The singing was in a minor key, but the music changed with every few verses, giving thus a pleasing variety. She sang with exquisite expression, but with a weird, uncanny air, which, beautiful as it was, affected the hearer with a singular sense of mingled attraction and repulsion, at length merging into such an irresistible fascination that the man rose from his seat on the rocks and drew slowly and noiselessly near her. At last he paused with his face so close to her cheek, as he looked with half averted gaze at her eyes, that he fancied dreamily that he could hear the beating of her heart. She was silent for an instant, and slowly turned her head full upon him, betraying a grace and wonderful flexibility of movement which made him think with an electric thrill of a swan. Her eyes seemed to burn his cheeks, so hotly did they flush at her look. Then, turning away again, she extended her left hand slowly until it touched and lightly clasped his own.

At the same time she took two steps forward and bent over the water, the white reflection of her undulatingly graceful form coming up from the depths to meet her.

And this was the song as she sang it: —

CALDON HILL.

King Henry glanced along his host,
From Dead Man's Fens to Greyfriar's Mill.
"Now surely shall he win this day,
Who holds yon crest of Caldon Hill.

"The Foeman's van hath forced its march,
And ye may see them pressing still
For Caldon's Edge. What knight of mine
Will drive them back from Caldon Hill?"

His gallant knights' swart cheeks grew pale
As moodily they gazed around: —
"Our swords are thine. Our souls are lost
If tread we Caldon's thrice-banned ground."

Thus coldly spake the barons; then
An icy boding silence fell.
The monarch frowned and sighed; he knew
The portent of their words full well.

A heathen king, in ancient days,
On Caldon burned his Christian bride;
And men fell 'neath the Church's curse
Who, since, set foot on Caldon's side.

Young Roland Gordon bowed him low:
"And should it be my Liege's will,
It were my joy to seize and hold
For victory dread Caldon Hill."

"Now God go with thee, dauntless youth;
And if thou com'st as victor back,
I pledge thee here my royal word
An earldom fair thou shalt not lack."

Then Roland galloped sore. Behind
Close pressed his lances' thick array.
But sad he cried, "Mine Alice dear,
This morn had been our bridal day."

"And now methinks my bridal bed
Shall be where slaughtered corpses lie,—
I scorn the curse; scatheless be they
Who for their King and honor die."

Then led he on his vassals true;
Their thirsting swords deep drank their fill;
The vultures battened many a day
On friend and foe at Caldon Hill.

Till night the battle fiercely raged
Along King Henry's line; and still
He heard Lord Gordon's bugle blast
Amid the strife on Caldon Hill.

And when at last the gory field
Was won, and gloaming's vapors chill
Sank low, the "Choosers of the Slain"
Wild revel held on Caldon Hill.

The remnant of the foe fled wide;
They left the victors cold and still;
For only dead and dying men
Besprent the crest of Caldon Hill.

Lord Roland Gordon stricken lay
Beneath an oak; a gushing rill
Of scarlet life-blood from his breast
Deep dyed the heath on Caldon Hill.

A courser darted up the slope,
A maiden sprang from off the selle,
Her lissome foot, so light, scarce pressed
The purple bloom of heather-bell.

She threw her on his form. She felt
His heart. Alack, 't was beating still!
She faintly moaned, "O love, is this
Our bridal bed on Caldon Hill?

"My Roland! raise thine eyes, and see,
It is thine Alice! Love! I thrill
Thy soul with kisses! Canst not speak?"—
He smiled farewell on Caldon Hill.

She sank upon his heart; the saints
Her spirit snatched from grief and ill;
For Death had spread their bridal bed
Upon the crest of Caldon Hill.

The swans had stopped in their course, but the most beautiful among them still continued on, until it sat poised upon the water (so clear that the bird and its reflection seemed but one body) within a few rods of the maiden, just as the last verse of the song was to be sung. As Percy gazed intently upon the girl and the swan, the music stole forth again in its delicate minor, as soft as the south wind; but to his amazement the singing was by the swan!

He was standing partly behind the maiden, who had dropped his hand and extended her own toward the bird. For a moment the young man doubted his own presence, and actually drew his hand over his eyes to see if he were dreaming. But as the song softly proceeded, and he assured himself that he was awake and in possession of his faculties, for the first time in his life a thrill of superstitious terror swept over him and seemed to freeze his heart. It was only, however, for a few seconds that this continued. The inevitable revulsion of feeling came, and with a long breath of relief he muttered to himself, —

"The girl is a ventriloquist, to be sure; and now I am sane enough to realize that she is incomparably the best one whom I have ever seen."

The last notes had died away, and the lady turned slowly to him again with a smile, under cover of

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which he could see that she was closely observing him. He had completely recovered, not only from the momentary dread, but from the spell which she had thrown over him. He was fully himself again as he stepped forward and took her hand, saying, with kind and grateful emphasis, "You have given me a most exquisite musical pleasure. The singularity of your art is as delightful as your voice is beautiful. I thank you from my soul."

The maiden looked at him, puzzled, and seemed the least disconcerted. Perhaps she did not perfectly understand his language. Perhaps she thought that the uncommon power which she possessed as a ventriloquist, which she had used often with great amusement to herself and greater wonderment and terror to other people, was but a commonplace accomplishment in America.

His quiet self-possession showed that, for the time at least, the witching influence under which he had allowed himself to fall, had waned; and the pique and disappointment which this caused the beautiful and elfish creature were infinitely greater than Percy thought. He had followed the current of her sentiment to a certain extent; for the fair Vivienne was far more transparent than she would have deemed possible, being, with all her arts and really perilous fascinations, as Arthur Percy sagely remarked to himself, but a little country girl. Her puzzled expression gave way to a shadow of sadness; and as she at last turned from him, and taking a few steps for-

ward gazed over the lake, there were hot tears in her eyes.

Percy had fallen into his frequently recurring dreamy condition of mind, and was looking out upon the lake without seeing anything in particular, when a movement among the group of swans aroused him. The birds suddenly and without warning rose in a tumultuous, terrified way from the water, and flew swiftly, but close to its surface, toward the nearest island, — reaching which, they disappeared precipitately in the underbrush.

" 'T is a strange act; and wherefore? " queried the damsel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLACK TEMPEST.

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!

King Lear.

HER answer came in a low, moaning noise, quickly increasing to an angry roar, and from that to a frightful screaming, shrieking, bellowing rush of sound. A shadowy mist ingulfed the summit of the nearest mountain across the lake, and then a deep black mass of surging, billowy cloud rolled over its crest and swept down the side to the lake, advancing with the speed of the tornado. The air was deathly still where they stood, and the sunshine rested upon them as in calm mockery. Percy actually, for a second, wondered if he were dreaming in a horrible nightmare; but the girl turned to him with pale lips, yet with cold calmness, and grasping his wrist with icy fingers, murmured, "Come! 't is the Black Tempest. It spareth none."

Hastily glancing about, she drew him to the shrine. It was none too soon. The sombre shadow of the tornado encompassed them and the full force struck with a crashing roar as they threw themselves into the low doorway. The maiden instantly knelt before the image of the saint on the wall; but a gust seized

and whirled her around and half out at the doorway again. Percy caught her about the waist, and with main strength dragged her from the jaws of the storm. Then looking about he saw a second doorway which led into an inner cell a few feet square, cut into the solid rock. Rushing in with the maiden, he startled a huge owl which had taken shelter there. Its wings brushed their heads as it swooped out, and Percy caught a glimpse of the bird, seized by the tempest and dashed pitilessly against a tree trunk, from which it dropped dead into the swirl of driving snow, that now absolutely filled the air, sweeping into their little refuge in sheets of dry, cutting, suffocating, powdered ice.

The girl shuddered, and Percy realized that she was clad but for a quiet day and by no means prepared to encounter such a frightful storm. He had worn his military greatcoat, which was loose, reached to his spurs, and had a cape half as long. It was no time for ceremony, and drawing the maiden near, he wrapped the coat and cape around her. It was large enough to protect both as he held her closely into a corner, steadying himself against a side wall, and sheltering her from the screaming wind, which drove the snow in wildly flying eddies round the little cell. Her head was covered by the cape, but she made a little movement, and glancing down, he saw the white face upturned, the brown tourmaline eyes, shining in the dusk like firelight, fixed wistfully upon his own. So they stood long, taking no note of time.

At last she said, "Thou hast twice to-day saved my life," in penetrating tones that sounded clear and sweet above the roar of the wind and the crashing of boughs outside in the forest. "Nay, then, 't is sooth," she continued, in answer to his questioning look, "I had been dashed against a tree like the poor bird which we affrighted from its refuge, but for thy strong arm; and I had died since, from the cold and fury of this tempest, but for thy gentle care. There be two who love me, will thank thee with full hearts for this."

"And who are they?" he asked.

"My mother and my brother," she said.

"Poor child," he said ruefully, "little have I done thus far for you in comparison with what remains to do. For if this storm holds for the day and night, I scarce know how to keep you fairly protected from it, and warm enough; although the snow will, at this rate, before many hours, bury us in drifts that will be shelter from this fierce gale which searches our refuge so cruelly. Are you yet warm?"

"By my life, I should believe myself in my own bower!" she replied gleefully. "Nor am I cold nor distressed in whatever manner. But this tempest will die away eftsoon. 'T is the first that I have seen these two years last Yuletide. They come not at any time of year but at this season, and rarely enow then. 'T is a bitter one this, though. But vex not thy heart concerning me. Thou art more to be feared for by me, for thou 'rt but wounded man, and unused to our storms."

Even as she spoke the wind diminished, and to the young man's surprise soon ceased altogether. In a short time it grew lighter, and the snow no longer fell. He turned about as well as he could, without disturbing the protected position of Vivienne, and perceived that the clouds were breaking away. Indeed, within ten minutes after this, the sun was shining brightly, and with greater warmth than in the morning before the tornado. This singular storm had lasted but for a little more than an hour, yet the snowfall had been so great that it lay at least a foot in depth on a level, with huge drifts here and there. Percy now looked out into the forest, and it was pitiful to see the destruction among the noble trees. Some, here and there, were overthrown bodily, but great limbs strewed the ground in all directions, and the evergreens were torn to pieces. He began now to consider how he might be able to bring his companion to the castle without her being exhausted or drenched from the wet snow, which was already beginning to melt fast under the rays of the sun. He took a flat stone which had served for a shelf in the shrine, and began to clear the snow from the inner cell.

"What thinkest thou to do?" asked the girl, looking wonderingly on.

"To make it dry and comfortable for you while I go to the castle for horses and help to bring you home through these snow-banks," he replied.

"Nay, then, thou goest ne'er a step," she replied,

"or I go with thee. My mother will already have ordered the henchmen to come hither to our rescue. 'T is but a short mile."

Percy could but recognize the reasonableness of her argument, especially as the hot sun was melting the damp soft snow so rapidly that streams of water were beginning to pour over the face of the cliff against which the little shrine was built. In fact, very soon, to their dismay, these streams increased to small torrents, and poured not only over the ruined roof of the shrine, but into it in all directions, and bid fair soon to wet them through.

"Now, my Lady," said Percy, "there seems but one course to take, and there 's no time for debate concerning it. My riding-boots are water proof; and I will carry you up to that hill, resting you from time to time on rocks or limbs. From there we can take the road to the castle. Doubtless we shall meet your people before long with horses."

"'T were better I walked, for I care not for a wetting," she said doubtfully.

"Not so," he replied quietly. "It is not a mere wetting for you. It will be a drenching, and you can hardly walk through this heavy snow. You must do as I say, and quickly." She seemed pleased at his autocratic manner, and said softly, "Well, an you will."

He took her carefully up (she was as light as a bird), and it was fully time, for the water began a moment after to pour into the shrine in sheets.

"Now, Miss Vivienne," he said, "I propose to take you to that rock beyond the broken pine. The snow has been blown off its top, and it will be a dry place to leave you while I go to see if the road is passable. Meanwhile, please hold tightly to me, for the footing is none too good."

After a few minutes' wading, avoiding drifts as well as he could, the rock was reached, and placing the girl upon it, first spreading his cape for her protection from dampness, he left her, in order to find the road at the top of the cliff and see if there were signs of rescuers coming from the direction of the castle. He found that broken limbs and fallen trunks would prevent horses from descending to the glen from the roadway, and having with difficulty reached this himself, he was fortunate enough to see just below, and making their way up a slight rise, the seneschal and several men breaking the way through the drifts and leading two horses. He caused them to cut away branches and otherwise make the pathway into the glen clearer, so that he was enabled to bring out the lady without much trouble; and seating her on one of the horses, he mounted the other, and they made their way slowly to the castle. There was, however, less and less snow as they approached Eagle's Crag; it being evident that the tornado and snow-squall had expended the greater part of its force and volume on the line of the ravine leading up from the Swan Maiden's Dell.

They found Lady Dacre in great alarm about them,

fearing that they had been overwhelmed by the tornado. She gave all the credit due for their escape to the little saint on the wall of the ruined shrine, and vowed the said saint a dozen wax candles, with promise of repairs and renovation before the next Michaelmas.

"You called this tornado the 'Black Tempest,' Miss Vivienne," said Percy; "is it a frequent phenomenon here?"

"Prithee, pardon me, but I understand thee not," replied the puzzled girl. "Wilt be kind, and talk in English?"

He laughed and apologized. "'T is I," he said, "who need pardon. I should have known that you had not studied American. I meant to ask if such storms were common here."

"Not so," replied Lady Dacre; "they come sometime just before Yuletide, but scarce ever after. 'T is two years since there hath come one; and this was very fierce. Howbeit, they be all so, for that matter. 'T is death or wounds to be caught by them beyond shelter."

At evening came strange tidings. A clansman arrived from the chieftain to say that, three days before, the armies of the confederated lords and of the Earl of Sussex had arrived within striking distance of each other, but that battle did not seem imminent. There had been two or three skirmishes, in one of which the Ben-Ardlacs had driven the Lord Hurst of Dill from an advanced position. They

had met with no loss, but had taken a gun and some dozens of prisoners. The wary Sussex was well intrenched in a strongly situated camp, and awaiting the arrival of the King's trusted general, Lord Willoughby, with the combined arrays of North Devon and Yorkshire. Sussex was unlikely to come out and fight, although superior in numbers and cannon to the army under Douglas, for with Willoughby he would be well nigh irresistible. Moreover he would lose no strength by delay, while the mountain clans which composed a quarter of Douglas's force were impatient at protracted campaigns, and could not be kept waiting long unless a battle seemed in the very near future. On the other hand, Douglas did not feel strong enough to attack Sussex in his camp; and moreover, he was hourly expecting the arrival of his Grace, who should take command, but who was unaccountably delayed. Sussex certainly would not attack the Northern lords in the fens, where they were encamped, as he could not do so without great risk, and the defeat of his army would mean the enclosing of the King between the two arrays of the Duke of Egremond and the Western insurgents.

Such was the condition of affairs with the clan; but the messenger brought news of graver immediate moment to the weak little garrison at Eagle's Crag. He had lain at a village the night before, where he learned that the ruthless Lord of Pembroke, with nigh three hundred of his brigands, had taken the

little tower of Arden, belonging to a knight now with Douglas, and put the inmates, without regard to age or sex, to the sword. This was distant only twelve miles across the hills from Eagle's Crag, of which Pembroke knew the weak condition, and had boasted that he would subject to a like fate before two suns had set. The villagers on the opposite side of the lake, who were all Ben-Ardlacs, had already driven their flocks and herds, and had taken their sick and infirm either to the higher mountains, or brought them to Eagle's Crag to escape these ruffians; and the inhabitants of the hamlets below the castle had, with all their possessions, taken refuge at the Crag.

Percy questioned the seneschal closely as to the defences of the castle, and late in the afternoon walked with him down the hill. He found but one road possible to be taken by an attacking party, — the one by which he had come. It was through a ravine winding upward to the crest of the ascent, and with side walls so steep and high as to make of it a perfect cañon. The only other way of gaining the promontory, upon the highest cliff of which the castle was perched, was by boats; and the landing must be at the sole accessible point, which was the Swan Maiden's Dell, a place quite capable of defence. But there would be no attack by water, for lack of a sufficient number of boats on the lake. So that fact reduced the considerations relating to defence to the simple calculation as to how the passage up the ravine might best be disputed. Percy selected a turn in this road

where a few men might for a time stop the approach of an army. He immediately returned to the castle, where, as soon as he entered the hall, he was met by Vivienne Dacre, who said to him, —

"A word in private, Captain Percy, an it please you."

She led him to a small room opening from the hall. She was very pale, and the tourmaline eyes had veiled their witchery.

"Sir," she said, in almost inaudible tones, "we have an adage which saith, 'Bread to the coming, wings to the flying, who pray refuge;' and we can no longer be sure of sheltering you here, for it is a miracle if we can hold the tower, with twoscore old men and boys, against the ruffian scum which come against it. But we must do our devoir, and trust in Heaven for the issue. 'T is different with you. 'T is your devoir to join your army as soon as may be; and if you are pent up here, a siege, with massacre at the end, may be your fate. Now have I prepared a way for your departure which I believe to be in fair degree safe. At night-fall a large boat, which will hold you and your men and the rowers, with a guide, will be at the Swan Maiden's Dell. You must swim your horses, and will be put on land as near as may be to St. Helen's. The guide, who is a faithful youth, will conduct you to one or the other of the opposing armies, in either of which will be courtesy and safe conduct for you. Be ready to start at the gloaming. And — and — remember the friends at Eagle's Crag,

who, whether life or death be their dole, will — one of them at least — ne'er forget, e'en in death's dark shadow — "

She turned haughtily to the window, trying convulsively to control herself. Percy took her hand gently, and ignoring all that she had said about his going, asked kindly, "And in case the castle is taken by the ruffian lord whose wooing was spurned, what will Vivienne Dacre do?"

She turned swiftly, and the firelight flashed into her eyes again. She drew a long, gleaming dagger from her bosom. "This," she said, "is my dearest friend at need. It lieth warm on my heart. Before he laid hands on me, it would rest warmer in my heart. Thou 'rt answered."

"That is well, — and brave," replied he, smiling.

"And now," she said briskly, choking her emotion, "wilt be ready at the hour?"

"Yes," he replied dryly, "I trust to be ready for the undertaking which I propose. Do not, I beseech, consider me as desiring to terminate this most delightful interview, if I request you to invite your respected mother to favor me with a moment's conversation without delay."

"Ah!" she gasped, looking distressed, "thou talkest in American again. 'T is not kind, sir; for thou knowest I comprehend only English and French tongues;" and she actually began to be grieved.

"Oh, forgive me!" he cried in remorseful tones, carrying the not unwilling little hand to his lips.

"Indeed, I did not mean to mock you, child. That is good English, but I forgot that it is too modern. Pray, then, beg the Lady Dacre to allow me a moment's converse with her."

"What mean you? There 's surely but short space for farewell, and — instant departure — for your own safety."

"You are right," he replied; "there is but short space for what I wish to do." He opened the door and came upon Lady Dacre.

"Madam," he said, "do you wish to give me command, under yourself, of your castle?"

"What mean you, sir?" cried the lady, in surprise.

"Will you trust me, as a soldier of experience, Madam, to direct the defence of this post?"

"But, sir," she said, "'t is for you — hath not my daughter informed you of the arrangement for your escape?"

"She has, Lady Dacre. But when I leave your hospitable roof, I hope it will be over the bodies of your enemies. I have surveyed the ground with your seneschal, and — to make few words of it, Madam, for time presses — I want the services of a score of men with axes. I do not propose that the foe shall ever reach this cliff on which Eagle's Crag stands. Will you at once direct the seneschal to obey my orders?"

"Yes!" cried the lady, "and God's blessing attend thee, noble guest, whether thou dost elect to stay and share our fortunes or no. Thou art not called to do so."

She hastened away to give the orders.

"And wouldst thou share our fate, brave youth?" asked the girl, under her breath.

"Why not?" said Percy, smiling.

"Wherefore dost thou this?" she asked again, looking at him keenly, her beautiful head turning half away from him with a swan-like movement.

"Honor, duty, gratitude, tenderness," he replied quickly. She caught at the last word, and moving near, gazed at him with a witching look in her half-closed eyes. All at once the irresistible and weird fascination encompassed her again like an atmosphere. She took his hand.

"How may I thank you for this?" she murmured.

"Do not hold me now, Vivienne," he said; "for your safety's, your life's sake, I must not dally now." He shook himself free of the spell, and was a brisk soldier again. "I go now," he said, "to arrange my outwork. Here are the seneschal and his men."

He went out, calling his servant Alois, who appeared at once. "Alois," he said, "where is trooper Prynne?"

"Ici, mon Capitaine," replied Alois, who was an octoroon from Louisiana, eighteen years old, as handsome as well might be, and passionately attached to Percy.

"Well, but where is *ici?* Your *ici* generally means nowhere."

"À la port. Zat ees, at ze door, Capitaine," replied the boy.

"Call him, — and speak English.

"Prynne," said the Captain, when the soldier appeared, "how many rounds of ammunition did you bring?"

"Forty, Captain," was the reply.

"Are you a good shot?"

"I am called the best in the squadron."

"Well, I think that we three will have to take a hand in the defence of this castle, which will probably be attacked by to-morrow by a band of cut-throats, led by a ruffianly baron. I propose that we shall cut them up pretty well before they can get near the hill. Alois, you brought my Winchester, and you have your own rifle. How many rounds for each?"

"Trente ou quarante, mon Capitaine — zat ees," he corrected himself hurriedly, "fortee ou tirtee."

"Is that all?" said Percy, disappointed. "I hoped you had a hundred for each."

"Vell, so dere vas, mais Capitaine Paircee, he pair-meet ze Sare Harree Paircee fire avay many rounds ze Vendredi last past gone avay," replied Alois, ruefully.

"True," said Percy, regretfully. "Well, we can answer for a good many, I think, with what we have. We 'll show them a little Yankee fighting. See that your pieces are clean and ready for work."

As they went away Percy proceeded, with the seneschal and his men, to the bend in the ravine road, about half-way down the hill, where he caused

trees to be cut and rocks to be rolled into the roadway to form a breastwork and impenetrable barrier against cavalry. Before twilight this was finished, and a line of chevaux-de-frise made in front.

"My Lord will fight here?" asked the seneschal.

"Yes, and I want you to let me have a dozen archers and some arquebusiers. I mean that those rascals shall never get nearer than this to Eagle's Crag. Seneschal, will your men fight to the death?"

"What! my mountaineers? the Ben-Ardlacs?" cried the man, with a surprised and hurt look. "My Lord, no one of them knoweth how to turn his back. I would spare the foe myself to slay any such recreant."

"Now," continued Percy, "have you good watch and ward down the lake?"

"The best, my Lord Captain. If the rascaille scum are seen the other side of the Pembroke pass to-night, the fire will blaze from the Owl's Head."

"Where is that?"

"Yon black height beyond the lake —"

"Well said! Now keep good watch at the castle, and call me if anything unusual is seen."

Percy went back to the tower, ate his supper, bid the ladies good-night, and after making the rounds of the defences, went to bed and slept soundly.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEFENCE OF EAGLE'S CRAG.

For lady fair
See that thou fight.
Marmion.

ABOUT one o'clock in the morning he was awakened by a knock at his door, and as he had not undressed he sprang up and opened it.

Vivienne stood there, her great mass of dark hair enveloping her lithe form, her eyes flashing in the light of the torch borne by a servant, her face deadly pale.

"The fiery cross on Owl's Head, Captain," she said.

Percy seized and belted on his sabre, thrust his revolvers in his belt, took his rifle and slipped in a cartridge, shouted to his men in the adjoining apartment, who appeared fully armed, and then followed the maiden to the turret, from which he saw a strange sight. On the black face of the mountain across the lake was a veritable blazing cross! It must have been formed from piles of combustibles arranged down the steep side of a precipice for a considerable extent. It was burning brightly, and about its own length below it, was another single fire.

"That meaneth," remarked the maiden, "that the foe is marching rapidly through the pass."

"How long before they will reach the lake and cross the bar?"

"'T is near sunrise now, Sir Captain," replied the seneschal, who had joined them. "They will, doubtless, halt in the hamlet opposite, to eat, ere they attack. They may be looked for in two hours' time."

"Let your men have a stout breakfast, and send those whom I want with me, to the outwork within an hour, unless the enemy appear sooner. What range has this gun?" he continued, laying his hand on the little culverin near by.

The seneschal hesitated.

"Verily, I know not thy meaning, my Lord," he replied, puzzled.

"Will your cannon shoot to the bar? And have you men who can shoot it straight?"

"That can I, my Lord, and it will reach the bar," rejoined the man, proudly.

"Then, when they cross the narrow part, give them a round or two and hasten to join me. Dispose the rest of your men to make the best fight possible at the castle in case we all fall; and tell your men it is victory or certain massacre for all of us."

"Ne'er fear, my Lord. They will die e'er the foe cross the drawbridge, if we cannot stop them with our lives at yon gorge," said the man.

"Stop! there are no boats left on the other side the lake?"

"Only one, my Lord, on which our sentinel is now coming from the Owl's Head. There he cometh, passing the Isles of the Three Spirits. The other boats are all drawn up in the wood at the Swan Maiden's Dell."

"That is well. Now all is ready." Percy descended to the hall. The ladies, pale as ashes, but brave and cheery, were at the board. Vivienne watched Percy wistfully as he ate a substantial meal; and the men below the salt did like justice to the good cheer.

The dreamy Percy was transfigured. I who write know whereof I speak, for was he not my friend, and more than that?

Suddenly the gun boomed from the battlements. Percy sprang to his feet.

"Down to the breastwork, men, double quick!" he shouted. "Alois, take my rifle. I'll be there shortly." He rushed up to the tower. The seneschal was there at the gun, with three more men, hastily re-loading.

"Hurrah! my Lord Captain," he shouted. "My first shot struck them in front." Percy saw the head of a column of cavalry in disorder on the narrow causeway or bar. Two or three horses were down struggling, and one or two knights were trying to restore order and get the way cleared.

"Shall I fire after the next shot, sir?" asked the seneschal.

"Judge for yourself, Seneschal," replied Percy. "Get in more if you can. Then rejoin me at the breastwork. Whom leave you in charge here?"

"A good man, the archer Robin Oakleaf."

"Good! I go now;" and Percy rushed down, to hear as he descended the narrow stairway the culverin boom again, and another wild cheer from the gunners.

"Ha! that has told, too," he muttered.

Hastening through the hall he met the ladies. Lady Dacre knelt and called the blessing and protection of the saints on him. Vivienne held out both her hands. He caught and kissed them, and was gone.

He ran swiftly to the breastwork, the drawbridge rising after him as he passed over, and the portcullis rattling down. All warders and men-at-arms seemed to be at their posts. At the barrier he found his own men and twenty archers and arquebusiers, who also bore long spears. They huzzaed lustily as he appeared.

"Now, my Yankees," said he, cheerily, "pick out the knights, those with the plumes, and aim low!" He took his rifle and cocked it. The thunder of hoofs resounded, coming at a gallop up the pass. In a moment they appeared round the bend, a dark mass of men-at-arms, headed by two or three knights with waving plumes.

"Commence firing, and keep cool!" shouted Percy, taking aim himself. There was a crashing volley of rifles and arquebuses, and a flight of arrows whistled away. Then the Americans, whose arms were repeaters, aimed and fired again. It took some time to load the clumsy arquebuses; but the Yankees

fired so fast that it sounded like the skirmish fire of a large party. In a few seconds the smoke cleared, and there was the column, still staggering forward, struggling over fallen men and horses, and in great confusion. Every American shot appeared to tell; for in a moment there was a halt, then a rapid and irregular retrograde movement, and the enemy disappeared round the curve, leaving a dozen of men and horses struggling, or quite still where they fell.

"Hurrah! my brave fellows; you 've done well!" cried Percy. "But load away! They 'll be back in a minute."

Soon the enemy re-appeared, this time on foot, running up the rise, a knight in front waving his sword, and bearing his pennon himself in his left hand.

"Aha! I thought so," muttered the Captain. "Now 't will be hand-to-hand;" and he drew a bead carefully on the knight.

A few files back, however, rode a knight with extraordinarily heavy plumes. The knight in front sprang into the air with a shriek as Percy's rifle crashed, and this mounted one spurred to the front.

"Ha!" cried the seneschal, who had joined the defenders, "that is my Lord of Pembroke himself. Stand to it stoutly, sons of Ben-Ardlac; now cometh the hot of it!"

The American rifles kept up their steady, deadly fire, a man dropping at each crack, and the whirr of the arrows continued; but the arquebusiers fired only

once more, and then throwing aside their cumbrous pieces, seized their spears and lined the barrier. The enemy, still led by the knight of the heavy plumes, pushed fiercely on despite their severe losses, until they reached the chevaux-de-frise, only some two rods away. Here they were detained, cutting fiercely away at the obstruction with their battle-axes.

Several of the assailants fell, but they gave no ground, and finally forced a passage. Their archers had climbed upon rocks at the side of the pass, and were shooting at the defenders, some of whom dropped. Meanwhile Pembroke himself rushed stubbornly on, followed by his men-at-arms, who with louds shouts began to climb the breastwork. Percy, raising his piece, aimed point-blank at the Baron, and fired his last shot; but unfortunately it glanced off his helmet and struck the man next to him through the brain. Suddenly Pembroke's head and shoulders appeared above the parapet. He instantly rose yet higher, and made a furious downward thrust with his sword at Percy. The seneschal partially parried the weapon; but it cut through the Captain's uniform, and the hilt struck his side, hurling him backward. The Captain seized his opponent's wrist as he fell, and fired his pistol squarely in the man's face. His enemy, pitching forward heavily, struck on his head, and lay motionless. There was fierce stabbing and hacking at the few men-at-arms who climbed the works, and in a moment the enemy recoiled, although still facing the Ben-Ardlacs in surly rage. Then ensued for a

few seconds a cessation of the savage struggle, during which brief space there was heard loud shouting and clashing of arms further down the pass. Then came another surge forward of the attack, and suddenly Percy became aware of something waving over him in the air. Glancing back he saw some twenty men, the defenders who had been left to man the castle, rushing to reinforce his line. At their head was Vivienne Dacre, her long hair streaming in the wind, the banner of the Ben-Ardlac clan in her hands, her eyes blazing like flame, her face gleaming with war-like beauty, — a perfect Bellona.

"Listen!" she called to Percy, in a tone like a silver trumpet; "my brother's pennon is on the narrow way. The clan Ben-Ardlac attack the foe in the rear. If we hold them back here, not a man of the scum escapeth us! Show them no pity, clan of the Mountain Bear!" she cried, waving her banner.

The arrows were meantime flying thickly. Percy felt one tear through his sleeve, slightly cutting the arm. Several clansmen were struck down. He seized the wild girl and drew her from her exposed position, and snatching the banner from her grasp gave it into the hands of a mountaineer. Then he bore her, struggling to free herself, to an old man who lay against a rock with an arrow through his side.

"Here!" cried he; "hold your Lady in the shelter, out of their shooting!" The dying clansman with a last desperate effort seized the maiden, and held her out of the danger, despite her indignation.

Percy sprang to the works again, and perceiving that the enemy were giving way, he could no longer restrain his cavalry instincts. Drawing his sabre, and with his revolver in the left hand, he leaped over the works, followed by the mountain warriors shouting their battle-cry. The enemy fairly turned and fled; but the Ben-Ardlacs were upon them in a moment, cutting them down mercilessly. Then in an instant Captain Percy saw his mistake. The enemy, penned in the narrow way by an attack both in front and rear, finally turned in dogged despair, and being mostly in armor, they had the advantage in hand-to-hand combat. For a moment things looked very ominous for Percy and his men; but he and his Americans drew off a few steps, and used their revolvers rapidly. These produced such execution that a fresh panic seized the assailants, who, throwing away their arms and falling on their knees, shrieked for mercy. They might as well have asked it of fiends. They were cut down and slaughtered as if they had been wolves, — being, indeed, no better than such ravenous beasts, and were but receiving the fate to which they had devoted the clan Ben-Ardlac.

While Percy was climbing the breastwork to lead his men to this attack, he had suddenly glanced backward at Vivienne Ben-Ardlac, and had witnessed an act which almost unnerved him.

And now the victory being won, the butchery going on under his eyes was so terribly revolting that he leaned for an instant against a rock, becoming sensible

at the same time of a faintness which he soon found had a physical cause. He felt a warm stream flowing down his side. In a moment more everything grew misty before his eyes, and he sank to the earth; while the fight, or rather massacre, swept down the pass.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHE LOVED NOT WISELY, BUT TOO WELL.

A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!

Rokeby.

WHEN Arthur Percy opened his eyes to consciousness he found himself lying on a bed in a room of the castle. Several people were around him, and some were just finishing the dressing and bandaging of a wound in his side. He recognized the face of Alois, then that of the Lady Dacre, and next he saw the handsome visage of the chief Ruval Ben-Ardlac, otherwise Lord Dacre, who bent over him and was holding and wringing his right hand.

"Welcome back to thy senses, gallant guest and friend!" cried the chieftain, looking vastly relieved. "'T is to thee we owe our victory! And let me tell thee thou hast not a bad wound, nor one which had much weakened thee, save that thy hurt at Ravensclyffe had made thee unfit for such rare fighting. My halidom! for a man without armor to have overcome and slain the fell Pembroke in complete mail! And I tell thee, noble stranger, 't is to thee I owe the

lives of these my mother and sister, and my castle and clan! By Saint Anne of the Shrine, but what can I say to thee!"

"Thank Heaven for the outcome," said Arthur, in a low voice. "But had it not been for your coming upon their rear as you did, my Lord, I fear that the brave handful of your clan had not withstood so fierce an attack. We were too few for them."

"I think not," replied the chief. "They were already beginning to withdraw to their horses when we, fortunately, came up. Their leaders slain by you, they e'en had lost heart. They looked not for such resistance, — the fell scum of murdering villains! But here I rave, and thou shouldst rest and sleep. To-morrow thou shalt have tidings. Meanwhile all thy friends be safe and sound, and are with our array in the fens. Sleep well now on that. Till the morrow, farewell."

The Lady Dacre now gave Percy a sleeping-draught, and all then withdrew from the chamber save Alois, who remained in attendance. Percy slept for many hours. When he awoke it was early the next day. Alois still sat by his bedside.

Percy looked up. "Alois," said he, "how came I wounded? I knew nothing about it."

"Ah, mon Capitaine," replied the octoroon, "ze sword de zat dog Pembroke it cut ze Capitaine's uniform and make to bleed ze side. Ze hurt ees not deep. You be vell soon, sare, eef you lie steel zis two, tree day."

Alois bathed Percy's face and head, and made him more comfortable. There was a knock at the door, and upon its being opened the Lady Dacre and her daughter entered. After kind inquiries about his health and rest, the lady ordered Alois to get his breakfast, and a moment after said that she would go herself and see to the preparation of a meal for Percy, which Alois would be ready to bring by the time it was prepared. Vivienne was thus left alone with Percy.

Suddenly it rushed into the young man's recollection that he had not seen her since he led the sortie from the breastwork the day before (it seemed to him at least a week since the fight), and he remembered what he had witnessed at a glance at that time. The thought of it gave him a shudder, and he turned his face involuntarily to the wall. She started back trembling and walked to the window, where she stood looking out and holding on as if for support to the side of the casement.

Now what Percy had seen was this: as he climbed upon the breastwork to spring over and lead the counter-attack, he glanced back. The Lord Pembroke, who had fallen apparently dead inside the works, had sat up and was trying to rise, sword in hand. But Vivienne Dacre threw herself upon him like a tigress, and drove her long dagger again and again between the bars of his helmet. Percy did not wait to see more, but the fact was that in the sequel the wretch fell back dead.

Finally the girl turned partly from the window and looked at him askance. "They tell me thou didst take no hand in the killing after the fight."

"No," he replied.

"And you ne'er slay in the pursuit in your land?"

He was about to answer "No," but thought of Winchester and some other battles, and was silent. At last he said, "I never did. But we do not kill prisoners, especially wounded ones."

"But you shot that wretch down and left him stunned, to come to himself again to rise and stab you in the back. And because I was there, — I, whom he had devoted, together with [redacted] kin and clan, to slaughter, after having sworn basest insult to me that I would not wed him, — because I was happy enow to be by, and to save you and avenge myself and my own by a dagger stroke, — you look darkly away from me as I were a mountain she-wolf!" She burst into a torrent of uncontrollable sobs and tears.

Percy was terrified. "No, no, no!" he cried, "I pray you do not think this. I did not understand. Indeed, I thought the man was mortally wounded, and it — it startled me to see you — strike him. I pray you not think me ungrateful. Come here." But she leaned against the wall, weeping bitterly, and looked only once at him, with a face of intensely reproachful grief. Percy tore his hair. At last he started up on one elbow, in the effort displacing a bandage, and instantly a stream of blood flooded his

left side. The maiden was on her knees by the low couch in an instant, the thick tresses thrown behind her shoulders, her face still wet with tears, yet sobbing, but working simply and deftly to adjust the bandage and stop the bleeding. It was no great matter to accomplish this; but as she was so eager about it, Arthur let her do what he could have easily done himself, and then took both her unresisting hands in his own, saying very gently: —

"You must not be so grieved because I had not seen nor understood fully about that thing yesterday. You mistake me wholly. Indeed, I could not look 'darkly' at or away from you. I would I knew what to say to make you happy again."

He stopped in spellbound surprise and admiration. The creature kneeling by him all at once seemed to change her nature. She raised her head to a strange height, and then, gently and slowly turning her neck with a lithe, swan-like movement, the burning brown eyes slowly approached his, until, while they seemed to look through his soul, his own, alas, saw clearly into her heart!

Again the fragrant mist of fascination seemed to surround and exhale from her. He did not see her lips — so like scarlet rose-buds — move. They seemed to be slightly parted, and only breathing these words, in scarcely audible yet siren-like sweetness of tone: "Thou canst say that will make me happy again, — and evermore."

"And what may that be?" he asked, almost as

inaudibly, and speaking only to gain time to collect his utterly panic-stricken thoughts; for in bitter regret and sorrow he had read her secret.

"Even a swan maiden may not tell thee," she hardly whispered. And she dropped her burning face until it almost rested on his heart.

And there, beneath his disarranged garments, she saw that which quite rested on his heart. Quickly she withdrew her hands from his grasp. Without seeming effort she rose instantly to her full height and stood quivering above him, the picture of agonized amazement, with fingers strained in tremulous vehemence over her bosom; the face half averted, of a deathly pallor; blue lips parted for quick, short, convulsive gasps; and eyes fairly blazing, fixed upon that which rested on his heart.

Arthur Percy looked up at her, soul-sick with helpless, useless pity.

Then she swooped above him again and seized the locket, tearing apart the chain which held it to his neck, and opened it, fairly devouring the picture within with feverish gaze.

"Beautiful Kate Percy," she murmured to herself in a hollow tone, — "as my dream, — as the swan sang!"

She dropped the locket on his breast and turned away, standing a moment quite still, grasping her long, black-brown hair with both hands, and gazing upward, a vivid statue of despair.

Then she turned swiftly, and her long dagger

flashed from her bosom and above him. For an instant she towered over him in wild, furious, beautiful madness.

Percy had no time for fear, or even to formulate a thought; and yet he remembered afterward that, at the moment, it had shot through his brain that the coincidence would be a singular one if the weapon which had ended the life of her ruffian lover Pembroke should cut the thread of his own.

"Pardonnez-moi, Mademoiselle," said Alois, softly, as his hand grasped firmly her little wrist, "eet ces not vell to cut off ze lock of hair to ze Capitaine unteel he avaken himself up. He might start in hees dreams and make to himself to be hurt. Venez, s'il vous plait."

He gently but sternly drew her toward the door. She looked at him in dazed wonder, but followed for a few steps unresistingly. Then her eyes rested on the dagger, and she stopped short and drew her hand over her forehead with a troubled expression. At length she came to herself, and gave the weapon into his hands, saying in a low, hurried voice: —

"You need fear not more, Alois. It is all over."

She turned and walked swiftly again to Percy, and stooping quickly she took his face between her ice-cold hands and kissed him again and again, with lips which seemed to scorch; and while the man, miserable with bitterest remorse and sympathy, lay half choking under her desperate caresses, she was no longer there!

"Alois," he said hoarsely, when they were alone, "never a word of this while you live!"

"Nevaire, Monsieur," replied the octoroon, in an awe-struck voice. "Ze poor young mam'zelle ees mad!"

And, fortunately, so Alois ever after believed.

What a day the young man passed! Severely he upbraided himself; and yet as he thought over every hour of his sojourn at the Eagle's Crag, he could recall nothing which he had said or done which could have led to this. Full as heart and mind were of the image of Kate Percy, he had not dreamed that this weird, exquisite creature could love him.

He had accepted hospitality here, and, indeed, unquestionably had been saved from destruction at the hands of the ruffianly Pembroke, whom he would doubtless have encountered in the mountain passes had he not been sheltered here; and so had dreadful sorrow come in his train to these kind friends. He was utterly wretched, and determined to set out as soon as he could stand and ride.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTING.

Now farewell, and if forever,
Then forever fare thee well!

BYRON.

IN the course of an hour the chieftain came in and told him the news. The mountain clans, it seemed, had become impatient at the inaction of the wary Angus, who would not move from his strong position in the fens until the arrival of the Duke with reinforcements. It was near their planting time, and they had expected a quick, sharp campaign, involving plenty of plunder with which to return to their mountain strongholds. At length Lord Sussex himself grew uneasy, fearing that his prey would escape him, and leaving his fortified camp, fiercely attacked Angus in the fens, where the royal artillery was of no use. The result was his complete repulse with great loss, although this was not by any means a rout, and Sussex retreated in good order to his camp, still too strong to be followed by Angus. Meanwhile, news had come of the ravaging march of Pembroke through the mountains, whose defenders were absent with the insurgent army, and Angus despatched

Ruval Ben-Ardlac with his clansmen to cut off and destroy Pembroke, which he had done with such success, thanks to Percy's determined stand at Eagle's Crag. "And," added the chieftain, "your friends Warren and Pelham be at our camp yet with Angus, being refused safe passage by Sussex, who saith he awaiteth clearer orders from his King. Meanwhile the King hath marched far to westward with his array, and ere long must needs fall in with the Western lords, who have been joined by the Duke of Egremond. His Grace thought meet to march to their aid, rather than to ours, saying that we could maintain ourselves in the fens for many days against Sussex, but that the West sorely needed his presence and leading. And a secret message from the Percy's friends in South London saith that the General Vaughn is enraged at the King's treachery, and hath marched with half his small army northward, to demand, sword in hand, that you and the other officers and the troop of horse shall be restored to him safe and scatheless. Methinks he doth a hasty thing, for he may have to meet the whole array of Sussex. Yet Angus would then fall upon the Earl's rear, and a pretty battle would come of it, to our great joy."

"And I here, helpless!" groaned Percy, gnashing his teeth.

"Patience yet for a day or two," responded the chief, "and I return with a part of the clan to the field, and with your good company, I ween."

But Ben-Ardlac received such tidings that night that he was obliged to march on the following day, and Percy was entirely unable to accompany him. He remained in this condition of forced inactivity for three days more, chafing terribly, but still gaining rapidly his strength. At last an event occurred which favored his starting away on the second day after.

This was the arrival at Eagle's Crag of a party of travellers. It consisted of the Prior of the Abbey of Kentishwold, a man of great ability and influence, much trusted by the King. He had been sent a month previously on an embassy to the great barons of the North, to ascertain their condition of feeling and to try to break up their confederacy and prevent an outbreak. He was so much respected by the nobility of the realm, beside being of royal blood himself and of near kin to the King, that it was at first likely that his mission would be successful. In fact, he had managed to detach the powerful Earl of North Devon from the disaffected party. But in the midst of his work he had been stricken down by a fever, and before he recovered, the insurrection had broken out. He was now returning southward, and such was the respect and affection for his character that he travelled without question through the shires in revolt, lodging as a welcome guest at the very castles of the rebels, and treated with the utmost consideration. He was to rest for a day at Eagle's Crag, and then to proceed directly to the capital,

passing necessarily near the positions of both the armies lying watching each other at the fens. It was Percy's opportunity to travel with comparative safety, and the Prior expressed himself as pleased to have his company.

The ensuing day was one of the most lovely which Percy had ever known. He had been up and about the castle and grounds for two days, constantly growing stronger; and this morning he sauntered out for a walk with no particular care as to its direction. He had not seen Miss Ben-Ardlac since the painful interview of nearly a week before.

Wrapped in thought, he had not noted much which way he went, when he all at once found himself on the wood road leading to the Swan Maiden's Dell; and as he approached the ravine which led to this locality, he determined to visit it once more. In descending the gentle slope he observed the damage wrought by the tornado, and finally came out upon the charming spot. Being fatigued and heated by his walk he stepped into the shrine, and sat down on a rock near the doorway to rest. He had been there but a moment when, to his great surprise, he heard a female voice by the lake-side warbling a plaintive air, and looking out he saw a form which he instantly recognized as that of Vivienne. She was dressed entirely in black, and stood leaning against the same tree that she had rested upon the day of the tornado, distant but a few rods from him. She had evidently not observed his presence. Her

attitude was most graceful; her heavy hair fell loosely over her shoulders; her face, which was turned partly away from him, was of a ghastly pallor. Her song was as sweet as that of a dying swan. There were some wild swans out on the lake, and they were, as before, slowly approaching her; in fact, she had been in the habit of petting and feeding them.

Ever and anon she threw her voice out over the water practising that strange ventriloquism which had so startled him on the former occasion; and even now it was hard to realize that a response to her singing did not come from the birds themselves, as she sang some verses in this way. All at once she stopped, and putting her hands over her face turned directly toward the young man. Fearful of disturbing her, and finding himself in an embarrassing position, he shrank back into the shrine.

But she walked directly to it and looked in full upon him.

"Pardon me, Miss Vivienne," he said in confusion, "and believe me I did not know —"

"Do not speak," she said. "Had you known of my presence here, you had not come; and I am most blythe of your coming. I would fain discourse with you for a brief space, — for the last time in this world," she added in a choking voice. Then she went on very gently and sweetly, extending her hand, —

"I pray you walk with me to the tree where we stood together on that day." He took her hand and

they walked to the tree, and she leaned on it as she had done before. She seemed very weary, and he was shocked to see how haggard was her beautiful face, although there was yet a very peaceful calm in it.

She looked at him and spoke very frankly and very softly. "I feel no shame that I loved thee, and shall love while life lasts, — which will not be long. I only wonder that I had the wild hope that such as thou art might love the poor mountain maiden, the daughter of a proscribed name and clan, the more so that thou lovest and art beloved by the peerless Katherine Percy."

She stopped a moment and looked out over the water, then went on.

"Since the last day when I saw thee I have been at Ravensclyffe, and did abide a day with her. She is far more beautiful than when we were together at the convent. Thou couldst but have loved her, for she hath as much sweetness and tenderness as beauty.

"We mingled our tears, — she, both in pity for me, and for it might well be she ne'er should see thee more; I, that I must ne'er again behold thee. It might have been different for me had — had fate ordered other than as things be; but nathless I, with all heart and soul, wish her an early coming of her joy in thy return. I shall pray before the Virgin, night and day, for you both; for, Yuletide past, I take the veil at St. Helen's Cloisters. At my desire

they require not of me the novitiate, and the sooner I leave the world the sooner cometh peace.

"Kate writ thee a letter, and I brought it thee. Take it."

She handed him a quaintly folded and sealed missive; then continued, —

"Now is this our eternal farewell; and I ask three things of thee, all very dear to my heart.

"First, take this poor gift. Keep it till thy marriage day, then clasp it on the arm of thy bride. 'T was once worn by the Lady Ida, the Swan Maiden of sorrowful memory. 'T is a precious heirloom, and that I prize it so highly, I devote it as a little token of my love for thee and for her. May it prove an amulet."

She unclasped the strange gold armlet with the swan's head and ruby eyes, and gave it him. Then she went on: —

"Next, I pray kind and tender remembrance and prayers whilst thou livest.

"Then this, my last wish." She took both his hands in her own and looked, with a faint blush, full in his face, the brown tourmaline eyes beaming with a lustrous softness that he had never seen in them before, yet expressing the very intensity of hopeless longing.

"I gave thee that last day, in wild, heartbroken love, three kisses. Give them now back to me with tender farewell. And this will be all betwixt us two."

Percy unfastened a gold crucifix which he wore,

and clasped the chain about her neck. "My mother had it always on her heart. She hung it over mine when she was dying."

The girl's face expressed delighted surprise, and she kissed it fervently. "It will ne'er again leave my bosom," she murmured.

He took her in his arms as if she had been a child. She laid her head wearily against his heart, gazing up at him. Her eyes, indeed, never left his. To the day of his death he was haunted by the wistful despair in her face. His own eyes were half blinded by tears.

He kissed her as she had wished, saying, "Farewell, Vivienne." She drew herself back and turned slowly away, still looking upon him, as we look for the last time upon our dead; and like the sigh of the summer wind came the words, —

"Farewell, Arthur."

She walked away to the shrine and knelt before the image of the saint.

Percy looked about him. The Swan Maiden's Dell was beautiful in the morning light. Out on the isle-studded lake the sunbeams danced on the ripples with merriment which seemed to mock his heavy heart. The far hills were brilliant in their fresh verdure, and the mountains beyond blue in the warm, misty atmosphere. Close in shore, within the quiet little cove, the white swans were watching him curiously, showing no fear, — their reflection in the still water as perfect as themselves.

He glanced up, and his eyes rested upon the cloisters of St. Helen's in the dim distance, where Vivienne would soon seek refuge and peace. Would she find the peace? "God grant it!" he thought, as he turned and walked slowly up the ravine.

CHAPTER XV.

GRIM-VISAGED WAR.

What soldier's heart thrills not, who hears
The rattle of the musketeers,
The flashing scabbards' steely clank,
The guns' deep boom on either flank,
And 'neath the standard blue, the cheers
That fire the horsemen's charging rank?

Old Song.

PERCY made his farewell and acknowledgments to the Lady Dacre that night, and the next morning, very early, the little cavalcade left the Eagle's Crag. Just as it turned to enter the rocky defile which led down the descent, he looked back.

On a turret partly concealed by the battlements a slight form, robed in black, was standing. He took off his cap. Vivienne waved a mantle. Then the rocks shut him out from her sight.

The party with whom he travelled consisted of the Prior, who was a dark, handsome, and very austere man, who seldom spoke, half-a-dozen ecclesiastics in waiting upon him, and as many lay brothers. There were two led sumpter horses.

The road, which was rough and rocky, soon left the lake and struck off across the mountains. They passed within a mile of St. Helen's, a gloomy pile

of irregular buildings surrounded by a high wall. The Prior said not a word all the morning, and Percy was too much occupied by his own reflections to regret the priest's taciturnity. About two o'clock in the afternoon they reached a little mountain meadow, on a stream which fell from the rocks above in a picturesque cascade, the water of which was as clear as crystal.

"Here we will tarry a space," remarked the Prior, "where man and horse may eat, that they live. Will it please you and yours to break bread with us?"

"I thank you, reverend sir," replied Percy; "but you will allow us to contribute of our modest stores, for I am well aware that travellers carry nothing superfluous."

"An it please you," replied the priest, smiling slightly; "but we travel not too lightly furnished. Travellers must needs keep strength in their bones."

And indeed, from the variety and quantity of the rations spread before them as they reclined upon the turf, it seemed that the good Prior did not propose to hunger nor thirst upon his journey. After he had pronounced a short and manly grace, he showed himself a stout trencherman, and the others were not far behind him, as the long ride in the mountain air was productive of keen appetites. After the meal, the Prior having duly given thanks, Percy produced cigars, and offered one to the clergyman, explaining the nature of the luxury. The churchman courteously declined it, but burst into a hearty laugh,

the only one in which he indulged during the journey.

"I cry you pardon," he said, "but I have heard of the terror of those things which beset our beloved Cardinal when he first beheld them on board your ship. I marvel not at it, for surely the things be strange enow to us. Nathless, the smoke smacketh verily of incense," he added, as the wreaths curled around in the air. "But 't is meet our beasts be saddled. We have yet long miles to go ere we reach the village of Hardinge, where 't were well we pass the night."

They accordingly set out again, and the Prior became as taciturn as before. Late in the evening they were descending the further slope of the pass, and two hours afterward reached, after issuing from a wood, the site of a village or small town. But as they entered it they came upon sights which struck a chill to their marrow. Burned cottages, dead cattle lying about, and scattered here and there the corpses of men, women, and children, in all states of mutilation.

"What means this?" asked Percy, aghast, of his companion, as they stopped, awe-stricken.

"It meaneth a raid and a massacre," cried the Prior, with a blanched but stern countenance. "It is war, which, please Heaven," he added, looking up and crossing himself, "I have done my poor best to turn from this land."

"Ha!" he exclaimed, looking down at the bodies

of two men-at-arms, "this be some of the work of that villain Pembroke. There be two of his retainers. See you that cognizance? T is his. There hath been fighting as well as murder here."

"Thank Heaven," ejaculated Percy, "the scoundrel has ridden his last foray!"

"Ay, and thanks to you, young man, who had so gallant a hand in his overthrow. But let us ride on. There is the monastery of Merrow five miles beyond, where we may lodge without such ghastly company. This were a charnel house in which to rest."

After another hour they reached the monastery, where they found kind welcome, and were entertained until morning. The monks had heard of the destruction and massacre at Hardinge, and were going on the following day to give the dead Christian burial.

Early the next morning they started on their way again, after friendly adieux and thanks (to which Percy added something more substantial) to the hospitable monks of Merrow, and at nightfall reached the fens of the White Forest, where they came to the fortified camp of the Earl of Angus. Here Percy found his friends, Bruce, Warren, Pelham, and the cavalry troop, who had been refused safe conduct and passage further by the Earl of Sussex. This Earl was said to have been joined by North Devon and other lords with considerable bands; and here also he learned for certainty that General Vaughn, angered by his treatment by the King, had indeed

marched out of his camp with some fifteen hundred men and a strong force of artillery, and was now well posted some three miles in rear of Sussex, with whom he had been for two days negotiating in regard to safe conduct for Pelham's detachment and the officers with him. Moreover, there was communication, in a roundabout way, between Vaughn and Angus; and at midnight there arrived a staff officer from the General with a despatch for Warren, which ran thus: —

You will inform the Earl of Angus that I get no satisfaction from Sussex as to a safe passage for your party, and have this evening intercepted a messenger from the King to his Lordship, the purport of whose orders to Sussex is that he attack us in force, and extirpate every American. I am fully persuaded that we must fight, and will consequently act with Lord Angus most heartily. General Levin has just joined me with three hundred and fifty infantry, Hamilton's and Morton's cavalry, and Parkman's battery. This gives us some nineteen hundred infantry, nearly four hundred cavalry, and eighteen guns. I will move out of this position at sunrise, and shell the enemy out of his camp. If Angus will move with all his force to the attack at dawn, and assault furiously, I think all will go well. I have fully reconnoitred the ground, and there is plenty of opportunity for the artillery to act freely, and yet be well supported. Tell Angus that I have learned how and where Sussex has his guns in battery, and my chief of artillery engages to dismount and disable them, so that by the time of his (Angus's) attack there shall not be one which can be fought.

See that Pelham does not attempt to charge their heavy

cavalry with the sabre. 'T is of no use. Keep aloof and use carbine and pistol.

Has Percy rejoined you? Lieutenant Maywood will remain with you. Request Lord Angus to return an immediate reply, *and by several messengers*, in case one or more are taken or killed.

VAUGHN,
Major-General Com'dg.

A. C. OLDHAM,
Capt. & A. A. G.

Captain Warren, accompanied by Percy, went instantly to the quarters of the Earl of Angus, where they found the barons assembled, debating the feasibility of an attack upon Sussex; for the mountain clans could be held no longer, and their departure would render offensive operations utterly impossible. The condition of affairs was beginning to look serious; for while Sussex, even strengthened as he was by the arrival of several barons with their following, could not attack them in their position with any prospect of success, provisions were already scarce, and in the event of the defeat of Egremond by the King, the latter's army could easily cross the mountains, now undefended, and cut off the retreat of Angus from the White Forest.

The American officers were courteously welcomed to the council of war. "I know not," said the Earl of Angus, smiling, "but that my Lord of Sussex may have done us great service in so churlishly refusing our friends passage to their camp, for I hear to-night

that the General Vaughn hath sent for and received a reinforcement. That looketh as if he thought there must e'en be war."

"Indeed, my Lord, he has so decided," said Warren. But he was interrupted by the exultant shouts of the barons, who crowded around the Americans. — "I have orders, my Lord, from the General, with most important matters to be communicated to your Lordship;" and he read the despatch. It was received with the wildest demonstrations of delight. When these had subsided, Angus said: "My Lords, our gallant ally hath set us our measure. Now to make ready for the dance." He then proceeded to assign the various leaders to their posts, and gave his orders for battle. "And now," he said, turning to Warren, "how will it please you to engage, Captain Warren?"

"I beg pardon, my Lord," replied Warren, "but since Captain Percy has arrived, he is in command of our small force."

"I think, my Lord," said Percy, "that as we do not wear armor, we had best not engage at close quarters with heavy cavalry, but rather take position during the action, from time to time, where our fire can be most effective; and I would suggest, by your leave, that your troops should be told that if they see us withdrawing from any part of the field before the enemy's men-at-arms, they must not believe us flying, but seeking other places where we can best fight."

"'T is well thought of, sir," replied Angus, as if

struck by the consideration. "You could ne'er withstand a charge of mailed knights, in your garb, and but a handful of you. But after what we hear of Captain Percy's prowess at Lord Dacre's castle of Eagle's Crag, and his overcoming and slaying the brute of Pembroke, we can trust him to order his battle as it pleaseth him, I ween, and blythe shall be the outcome."

"Then, my Lord, if you authorize me to act independently, I shall take my men out in front before the general action has begun, and show you what our skirmishing is, and how we open a battle, — retiring to give place to your heavy troops as you advance, and seeking new opportunities to make the most of our fire, which will probably surprise and annoy the enemy very much."

"'T is well," replied the Earl; "and now, my Lords, let us pledge our noble friends in a cup of wine, and then, after an hour's rest, let every baron array his vassals. I marshal the host at dawn, after marching out upon the moor."

The company then separated. The Americans went to Warren's quarters in a hut of pine boughs, and lay down for what rest they could snatch.

It seemed to Percy that he had but closed his eyes when the trumpets screamed the reveille. He found the squadron already drawn up on its parade, accompanied by all the American staff officers. Dr. Bruce had his hunting-rifle with him, and proposed to take part in the fight, sincerely hoping

that he might not be obliged to practise his profession that day.

The camp was all astir, the barons leading their vassals out to the plain, where they were to be marshalled by the Earl of Angus. The artillery was being hauled out to the moor. Suddenly a gun boomed some three miles away. Then another and another, and soon a furious cannonade began. The fight was on! The American artillery was plainly engaged.

Percy harangued his men, telling them of the victory at Eagle's Crag, so fully contributed to by the three Americans engaged, and explained what he expected of the troopers, and that they must uphold the honor of the American army on this side. He was answered by three thundering cheers. They then marched out by fours to the moor, being wildly cheered by the South English as they passed.

The moor sloped downward for a short distance, then came a gradual rise for about a mile; then thick woods where the enemy lay. The left was protected by a deep and wide river; the right by morasses extending into and beyond the enemy's left flank.

Pelham deployed his men as skirmishers, and they moved out at a trot, swiftly approaching the wood. They could already see the American shells bursting in the air above the trees. Very soon a large number of stragglers ran out into the open, in a moment more followed by a mass of men in great

disorder, with knights in flashing armor riding hither and thither, evidently trying to restore discipline. As they drew nearer, they could see that these troops were arquebusiers, archers, and pikemen. The enemy now for the first time, apparently, noticed the thin line of skirmishers approaching, and it was seen that they were being marshalled in battle order, which appeared to be a formation in lines of columns. Meanwhile the American cannonade increased in intensity, and sounded like an incessant roar. Percy was now within three hundred yards, and he ordered Pelham to dismount and commence the fire, which was done. The officers took great pains to have it careful and deliberate, and it was plain to see that it was very effective. The arquebusiers opened fire themselves, but with no effect whatever, as their bullets nearly all fell short. A few went over, but neither man nor horse was hit. It was soon observed that they were very much shaken, even by this skirmish fire of a single company, and in about fifteen minutes their fire ceased and the arquebusiers retreated pell-mell into the wood. Those on their left, however, held their ground and began to advance. The Americans had been moving forward slowly all the while, and now were within less than three hundred yards of the wood. Percy looked back and saw the whole of Angus's army approaching. Having cleared the field in his front, he ordered the troopers to mount, and rode away to the right to open fire on the body

of the enemy, which had marched out of the wood and was advancing to meet Angus's right wing. All at once a column of knights and men-at-arms issued from the cover, and galloped straight for the little American squadron.

"Wheel into line, Pelham, and give them a volley!" shouted Percy. They waited until the enemy were within point-blank range.

"Aim low, men! aim low! Ready! aim! fire!" cried Pelham. The crash of the volley snuffed out, for the instant, the roar of the cannon, and the head of the column fairly melted away. The survivors were thrown into utter confusion. The thunder of hoofs behind and on his flank called Percy's attention, and a body of men-at-arms, led by a knight, whom Warren recognized as the young Lord Howard of Lee, dashed by with levelled lances and waving pennon, shouting their battle-cry. They rode against the staggering column of the enemy and bore them down by dozens, a few only escaping in wild flight toward the wood.

Then Percy galloped off to the extreme right, and deployed to the front again before the now rapidly advancing right wing, which was commanded by Lord Reginald Percy. The Americans rode to within two hundred yards of the arquebusiers and archers, and dismounting again, opened fire, doing great execution. But the enemy halted and fired a volley, while the archers began to shoot rapidly; and while, fortunately, not a man fell, yet three horses

were killed and several more wounded. As the right wing was now close up, Percy rallied and mounted the squadron (those whose horses were killed jumping up behind others) and moved yet further to the right, so as to uncover Lord Percy's front. The Americans now were on the edge of the morass, and they dismounted, tied their horses to trees, and began a vigorous oblique fire at the archers, who were on the enemy's extreme left. It soon became too hot for these archers, who fled into the wood again, and the American fire ceased as the right wing came up parallel with them. It consisted of the Ben-Ardlacs on the flank, and next on their left was another mountain clan. Just as the Americans ceased firing, a wild shout burst from the mountaineers, who rushed forward with trailed spears to charge the arquebusiers. They received a volley at close quarters, and quite a number fell; but they only increased their pace, and a moment later fell fiercely on the enemy, whose pikemen, mingled with the arquebusiers, received them with levelled weapons.

For a few moments there was savage fighting; but the onset of the mountain men was scarce checked, and they soon were seen driving the disordered ranks of the foe toward their cover. Very soon the Ben-Ardlacs were seen to halt, and then to form a close and thick line four and five deep, the front rank kneeling, and all who bore spears in the front ranks.

The reason for this was soon perceived. A body of heavy cavalry was seen coming on swiftly, riding

down their unfortunate flying infantry without mercy, and driving straight at the mountaineers. A few of the best shots among the Americans opened fire, emptying a number of saddles as they advanced, but having no effect in preventing their charge. They rushed at the Ben-Ardlacs' line, and Percy expected to see it annihilated; but to his great surprise a large number of the horses plunged onto the spears and rolled with their riders in the dust, thus throwing their whole column into disorder. But the clansmen's battle-order was also broken, and before they could have extricated themselves to form another living bulwark, the cavalry had so far recovered their array as to have ridden down the disordered mountaineers, had not Lord Reginald Percy at the head of his chivalry fiercely charged the enemy in flank, overthrowing or forcing them toward the morass where the Americans were posted. These now opened a brisk fire, which completed the enemy's discomfiture. A score of horses without riders dashed into the morass, and these were seized by the American troopers in numbers sufficient to mount those whose horses had been killed or wounded.

The whole right wing was now in rapid motion toward the enemy's fortified position in the forest, the various bodies of royal troops, horse and foot, which had met with such signal repulses in their counter-attacks upon this wing, having retired within their works again. But on the left the battle was

still stubbornly contested in the open ground, and it was not until Lord Percy rode over with his Northumbrian vassals to the rescue of the centre and left wing, that the enemy was compelled to fall back in that part of the field.

Meanwhile the mountain clans on the right were having a hard time of it in their assault on the enemy's position in the woods; and Captain Percy determined to try to get round their flank through the morass with his men dismounted. Accordingly they advanced through the marshy woods, meeting with no one, until suddenly from some high ground to their left front there came a whizzing flight of arrows, and half-a-dozen men went down. Percy had an arrow through his jacket, and Pelham, less fortunate, was severely wounded in the shoulder.

"Take cover, men, and commence firing," shouted Percy, not an instant too soon, for the air was filled with arrows, and soon a body of archers advanced among the trees, drawing their long-bows to their ears, and shooting rapidly. They were led and directed by a knight in armor, who, however, had very nearly reached the end of his earthly pilgrimage; for, in response to a sharp summons from Warren's rifle, he leaped wildly in the air and fell heavily on the forest grass. The range was only fifty yards, and the archers dropped so fast before the American fire that they soon broke and fled; but not until they had amply avenged the death of their leader, for not only did a sergeant and two more brave men fall dead in

the hail-storm of arrows, but the young Lieutenant Russell, a gallant boy of nineteen, received a shaft in his heart.

The foe was pursued by the Yankees into the thicker woods and toward the sound of the combat. And now could be heard, at the further side of the forest, the incessant rattle of musketry, as well as the roar of the American guns. The principal action was evidently between the armies of Sussex and Vaughn.

Nothing more opposed Percy and his men, and suddenly, to their surprise, they found they were on the inner side of a line of strong breastworks, which had been deserted by the defenders at this point. Pushing on, they soon came upon the flank of the enemy, which there consisted of arquebusiers and archers, with some few mailed knights and men-at-arms, who, fighting furiously with the right of the mountaineers as they pressed to the attack, did not observe the stealthy approach of the Americans. These now opened a destructive flank fire upon the enemy, who, panic-stricken, broke and fled in wild disorder, followed by the clansmen, who cut them down pitilessly.

Percy now formed his men on the right of the Ben-Ardlacs, and the line immediately advanced; for the panic had become general, and the troops of Angus soon carried the whole extent of the defences, the enemy flying in complete rout. They pushed forward steadily and in good order through the open wood.

Everywhere were traces of the results of the shelling in the early morning. Bodies of men and horses lay thickly about, a number of their clumsy cannon abandoned, and everything betokened the utter confusion and destruction which was due to the artillery fire of Vaughn.

At last the open ground was seen in front, but no enemy, although the sound of the battle became more and more deafening. As they reached the confines of the forest the Earl of Angus rode to the right, and the whole line halted.

"Captain Percy," said the Earl, "methinks 't were good soldiery if thou shouldst mount thy men and ride round the right of the foe on the moor yonder, that you reach General Vaughn, and with my honored duty to the General, say that we drive the array of Sussex before us on the rear of his troops yet fighting; and that the General's cannoneers have a care not to shoot at us as we charge the Earl's rear. What sayest thou?"

"Excellent, my Lord," replied Percy. "I will take my men back to their horses, and be here again in a few moments."

This was accomplished, and then the Earl, Lord Reginald, and Percy with his troopers, rode forward out of the wood, when the scene was revealed on the plain below. The force defeated by Angus was retreating in great disorder, making for the ford at the river on the left. Sussex's troops, fighting the Americans, reached almost from the morass on the

extreme right entirely round the right of Vaughn's little force, completely outflanking it, and it was clear that the Americans, vastly outnumbered, were slowly giving ground, and endeavoring to protect their right flank. They were in the form of a crescent, the points of which were covered by their artillery, which was firing canister, and the cavalry, which now and then charged forward, not coming to close quarters however, but using their carbines and pistols.

A body of South English mounted archers were galloping toward the morass, evidently intending to ride round the right of Sussex's first line and attack the American left, which was close to the morass.

Percy led his little squadron down the slope at a gallop, and advancing unseen by the enemy through a growth of young trees, came suddenly upon this body of archers at point-blank range. He halted immediately and ordered a volley fired at them. Then, drawing sabres, the Americans rushed to the charge. The enemy was completely confounded at this attack. Many of them fell from their saddles, and the rest, who seemed to think their foe dropped from the skies, fled pell-mell upon the rear of their first line, quite demoralizing it. Then Percy rode at a gallop along the rear of the enemy's right, marching by file so as to allow free use of the revolver by every man. A continuous fire was kept up all through the ride, with great execution, and still more valuable moral effect. In a few minutes the

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Americans had passed the huddled and irresolute right flank of the enemy, thus caught between two fires, and deflecting toward the morass in order to escape the shot of their own artillery in front, soon reached the American line, where roaring cheers welcomed them.

Percy halted his little troop in rear of the guns, and started to find General Vaughn, whose head-quarters flag he saw on a hillock in rear of the centre.

The General was sitting grimly on his black horse, biting away at a cigar, and looked up at Percy as if he had never been away.

"Well?" said he, sharply. "I saw your manœuvre in getting round their flank from the hill yonder. What news from there?"

"We have beaten and driven them from the field, General. Will you order each commander on the line not to fire on Lord Angus's forces, which will at once move down to attack the enemy in rear?"

"Yes; there they come now. Oldham, send to each brigadier and the batteries, and say that the Earl's army is now moving down the hill to attack the enemy's rear. Let them stand firm and cease firing, and be ready with the bayonet. Percy, say to Colonel Hawks that he will move round our rear to the right and join Morton. — The enemy will retreat toward the river and try to reach the ford," he muttered to himself. Then, —

"Here, Warren! have two squadrons deployed

on the left before that morass to stop those rascals from getting away there!"

By this time the yell of Angus's army, coming at a run, for the first time admonished the enemy what was upon them. At the same time the whole American line rushed forward with a cheer. For a few minutes the hand-to-hand fighting was savage and furious; but it could not last, and the enemy's entire right wing was captured or destroyed. Their centre and left fought fiercely for a time, but finally fled toward the river, followed closely and cut down mercilessly by both the American cavalry and the chivalry of Angus. The Earl pressed the pursuit most vigorously, and although the battle itself had not lasted above three hours, yet the chase was kept up until night by the insurgent lords. The American cavalry was recalled after reaching the river, as their battle was but a defensive one, and General Vaughn did not wish to participate in the slaughter of the royal army which now set in.

The enemy's loss was very heavy, the shelling of their position in the forest, in the early morning, having been terribly destructive. Among those slain by the bombardment were the Earl of Sussex himself, the Earl of North Devon, and a score of lesser barons; and about two thousand men, knights, men-at-arms, archers, and arquebusiers, fell in the shelling. All their cannon but one were dismounted, and the cannoneers killed or put to flight.

Sussex and his lieutenants were in consultation in

the edge of the woods when the firing began, and were plainly visible to the American artillerists. Several guns were trained on the party, and half-a-dozen shells burst among them. Not one escaped.

The death of Lord Sussex was, doubtless, the cause of the royal army having been so badly handled. He was a good soldier, and great confidence was placed in him by his King. His army seemed demoralized after his death, and fought well only on the open plain, in front of the Americans, whom they greatly outnumbered, and, in fact, might eventually have overwhelmed, but for their rear being attacked by Angus, after he had defeated the portion of the royal army opposed to him. The fire of the American infantry had been very destructive to their heavy cavalry, which, composed of the most distinguished barons and knights and their vassals, made it a point of honor to attack the American brigades through the hottest fire. But they were mowed down so mercilessly at short range, that, although they charged no less than fourteen times, yet they never came within twenty rods of the infantry. They then turned their attention to the batteries on the flanks, but with no better success, the canister heaping the field with them. The fire was the more terribly destructive that they always charged in column. Notwithstanding their fearful losses, however, their whole army showed the true English bull-dog pertinacity, and outnumbering the Americans as they did, the fate of the day might

have been quite different had the battle lasted until night, for the ammunition of the Americans was becoming exhausted; and had it come to hand-to-hand fighting, there could have been no question as to the result, with men in armor, ten to one, against those simply in modern uniform. Vaughn's cavalry, of course, could not charge the mailed knights, or their masses of spearmen, and could only do effective service with carbine and pistol.

The American loss, which was about two hundred killed and wounded, came from the arquebusiers and archers, and was sustained principally when the enemy's line pressed forward to outflank the American right. Vaughn's army had been obliged to fight in single line to prevent being flanked, taking advantage of every tree, rock, or inequality of ground to lengthen their front; and if the South English had attacked also in line, even three or four deep, they would have been able to outflank and almost to surround them. But, as was learned afterward from prisoners, the order from the Earl of Richmond, who succeeded to the command after the death of Sussex, was to attack in lines of columns, thinking by sheer weight of numbers to bear down the Americans.

This action was not a fair sample of a battle between a modern and a mediæval army. The disparity of numbers was too great to allow of its being a good test. And the fact that the Americans had mediæval allies complicated the considerations. Had they been ten thousand strong, and alone in the

field against the twenty-three or four thousand of Sussex, the contest between past and present might have presented a more strikingly instructive picture.

As soon as victory was assured, Percy, with surgeons and orderlies, hastened back into the wood to find Pelham and the men who had been struck down by the arrows of the archers, and to bring off the bodies of young Russell and the other gallant slain. They found four of the troopers dead, the others painfully wounded. Pelham, severely hurt, had managed to crawl to the edge of the morass for water. All were brought to the American camp, which had been established on the field of battle.

The American surgeons were busy with the wounded of the army. After they had attended to them they proceeded to give like care to those of their allies, very much to the gratification of their South English friends; and lastly, they turned their humane attention to the enemy's injured, very much to the wonder of the South English of both sides. A proceeding of this nature was evidently beyond the comprehension of these people. It savored of a practical Christianity to which they had not yet attained.

Quite a different thing seemed but a matter of course to them. The field was covered with plunderers, who despoiled slaughtered friend or foe alike, unless the dead were guarded by friends or dependants. There were many quarrels and some fights on the field over the booty, although these were sternly quelled by orders of Angus. He was com-

pelled, in order to keep the peace among his own followers, to hang two or three men on trees, for examples. In the plundering, the mountaineers were especially active. The clans were, from the hour of victory, under no discipline or restraint, except that of their own chiefs. Indeed, that night they one and all marched away, loaded with booty, for their mountain fastnesses. Ben-Ardlac himself sought out Percy and bade him a most hearty farewell, telling him that, when he came again, and as long as he should stay in the country, the Eagle's Crag was his home, and all that it contained his own to command. "Except," added the chief, "I hope and believe that my fief is to be restored to me; as it will assuredly be an victory seats his Grace upon the throne; and then I be again Lord Dacre of Tisdale, and Fernmoor Castle shall be more fitting abode in which to welcome my gallant friend than the Eagle's Crag."

And so the clans were gone. In every particular they and their conduct, under all circumstances, seemed to Percy as almost identical with the *personnel* and customs of the Scotch Highlanders of the ages prior to the time of Culloden.

The Earl of Angus, and all the barons indeed, came to pay their respects and render thanks to General Vaughn late in the day. They could with difficulty realize that so small a body of men could have held the vastly superior army of Sussex at bay, being themselves without armor. Yet when they saw the terrible execution done by the American artillery

and rifles, they wondered in another way. They offered Vaughn anything he could ask if he would join with them for the war. Nevertheless, when he decidedly refused to do so, they apparently fully appreciated and respected his reasons for declining. He assured them that he was fully in sympathy with them, and would certainly fight again if forced to do so, but that his orders and duty toward his own government required his setting out at the earliest moment on the voyage again. They evidently regarded him as a loyal and faithful "crown vassal" of his President, and pressed him no more.

The American officers were then invited to the South English camp to supper, and as many went over as could be spared. Courtesies and farewells were exchanged, Percy parting with especial manifestation of feeling (which was fully participated in on their side) with his friends Lord Reginald and Sir Harry Percy. These gentlemen, knowing of his relations with Lady Kate, regarded him already as a brother, and expressed themselves most warmly as to his welfare, and hoped for his early return to South England.

The South English army took up its route on the ensuing morning at daybreak. The Americans remained to bury their dead, and on the following day commenced their return march for their camp, bearing their wounded on litters. Nothing of note occurred on the way, and they reached their destination on the evening of the fourth day.

CHAPTER XVI.

WRECK AND RUIN.

The galley staggers before the gale,
The icy north wind screaming,
St. Elmo's lights on the tattered sail
All balefully are gleaming —
Till Kelpies swimming beneath the wave
Drag down the ship to her ocean grave.
Northumbrian Sea Song.

THE repairs on the flagship were completed, and the embarkation of the artillery and stores was immediately proceeded with. Then came the question whether the royal treasurer would carry out the bargain which had been entered into at the time of the purchase of the horses, and buy them back at a greatly reduced figure.

It was soon found impossible to have any communication with the royal officers, as the gates of the city were kept closed, and the burghers manned the walls as if the town were in a state of siege. The Queen, who was acting regent in the absence of the King, haughtily refused to entertain any negotiations whatever with General Vaughn.

A very serious question now arose. The ships were not half supplied with coal, and although this was one of the products of the shire of Cornwall,

none could be obtained in any way. It was brought by sea to the capital, and there were no coal vessels in the harbor. Moreover, it was learned that the Queen had issued a decree forbidding the sale of supplies of every kind to the Americans. Vaughn ascertained, however, that coal was shipped from the port of Tavistock, on the southeast coast of Cornwall, and he adopted an expedient which seemed proper under the circumstances, considering the necessities of the fleet.

He determined to take on board all the horses, sail for this port of Tavistock, and there take the coal by force, paying for it in horses. The utmost expedition therefore was used in breaking camp and getting the troops on board. In twenty-four hours after the plans were formed, the ships got under way. Before they sailed, however, a retainer of the Earl of Northumberland, who had been in hiding at South London, came into camp. He brought news which might, if true, be of great moment. A rumor had arrived of the total destruction of the King's army and the death of the monarch, in a great battle. It could not be authenticated, as the messenger who brought the story from the North had been immediately hanged by the Queen's order.

Captain Arthur Percy, exulting in the opportunity thus afforded him, immediately laid hands on this Northumbrian, and despatched him to the North with letters and gifts for Lady Kate Percy, rewarding him in advance most lavishly, and promising him yet

further guerdon from the fair lady if he should arrive safely and expeditiously. He gave him the best horse which he could select, and urged him away the same evening. It is to be hoped that the man won his further promised reward.

The ships sailed slowly down the coast. A South English merchant captain had been impressed as pilot, with promise of great pay if all went well, and of a halter in case he should betray them. The fellow proved faithful, and on the afternoon of the ensuing day he guided them into a little sheltered bay, where lay a number of the clumsy South English colliers waiting for the Queen's permission to sail for South London. Several of these vessels were peremptorily ordered to haul alongside the steamers, and a full supply of coal was taken from them. It was all the property of the Crown as it proved, and when this impromptu coaling was finished, the royal intendant in charge of the mines was invited on board the flagship, with a threat of bombardment of the town should he refuse to come. Under the circumstances he accepted the invitation.

His name was Sir John Burleigh, and he was a stout, wheezy, fussy knight, a little the worse, body, soul, and habiliments, for the wear and tear of time. He was presented to the Quartermaster-General of the army, who was a bit of a wag.

"You serve the King as manager of the mines?" inquired the American officer with affected hauteur.

"I did, my Lord," replied the knight, nervously,

"and I trust I may still. But, my Lord, doubtless ye know there now be two kings, — young Harry Plantagenet, son of that King killed at the bloody battle of Wye, a sennight agone, and his Grace the Duke of Egremond erstwhile, whom men say hath been proclaimed at Taunton. Ay, my Lord, I hope I serve under the King yet."

"Under which King, Bezonian? Speak, or die!" thundered the American, his small eyes twinkling.

Terrified by such an awful quotation, the knight turned pale and his teeth chattered. "Verily — verily — in good sooth, I apprehend you not. But 't were meet your Worship sent to the shore to inquire concerning these matters of Lord Ainslie. He yesternight seized the castle of Tavistock, belonging to his Grace of Cornwall, for his Grace of Egremond. Surely ye were the allies of the Earl of Angus at the battle of the Fens, ten days agone, and ye know of King Henry's defeat, and death after?"

"Ah!" remarked General Vaughn, who had sauntered within hearing; "that puts a different face upon matters. Captain Percy, you will at once go ashore with this gentleman and see Lord Ainslie, with my compliments and congratulations. Tell him of our enforced appropriation of this coal, explaining our need. The Quartermaster-General will go with you and make a trade of those horses in payment for the coal. Let everything be made satisfactory to Lord Ainslie. Invite him and his retinue on board."

This arrangement seemed vastly satisfactory to the fat knight, who was evidently in great alarm. For the possibilities were looming up in the horizon of his perturbed spirit that the sunlight might soon shine and the breezes blow betwixt his bald head and unwieldy body; and he naturally was anxious to postpone that consummation indefinitely. The party went ashore and were received most graciously by Lord Ainslie, who nevertheless pleaded his inability to comply with the invitation to visit the General, being obliged to march at once to join his Majesty King Alfred at Wyeside, whence they were to move on the capital.

Percy, who had been apprehensive as to the fate of his friends in the late battle, ascertained to his great joy that all were safe.

The exchange of horses for coal was gladly acceded to, as Lord Ainslie needed the animals sorely. The beasts were thrown overboard and swam ashore, where they were secured by the Baron's people.

The fleet sailed again in the afternoon, and from this time the story of the voyage is an unbroken record of disaster.

The coal thus obtained turned out to be of the very poorest quality, very hard and stony, and the use of it necessitated such hard and continuous work on the part of the firemen that it became necessary to detail soldiers to help them keep the fires clear; and it was found impossible to get up anything like a full head of steam. This promised badly for the

time when they should be among the ice. From the best information which had been obtainable in South England it was thought best to run up the west coast, passing through a broad strait which separated South England from a large island which lay west of it, following the Warm Current, which eventually, they had been told, turned off from the coast to the northwest, and as the South English mariners averred, struck the shores of the unknown ice-bound lands lying at the extremity of the open polar sea, and was lost there. It was thought that the current probably made its way between some of these islands, — as they must necessarily be, — and entered the South Atlantic somewhere west of the longitude of the west coast of South America.

On the second night, as they were steaming slowly northwest, about thirty miles from the land, and the shores of the island referred to some ten miles to westward of them, — the short period of darkness being perfectly clear (it was then within two weeks of the "Midnight Sun") — suddenly one of the terrific tempests burst upon them, such as Percy had witnessed at Eagle's Crag. It seemed to come from the mountains of the island, and was a hurricane of blinding snow and hail, which prevented all progress and spread a pall of impenetrable blackness over the sea. The roar was deafening, yet upon the flagship people thought they heard guns several times. The ship had been laid head on with all the steam which could be got up. The sea was not very high, but it

was churned into such a yeast of foam that it looked as if the snow was piling up on the surface of the waves.

The storm ceased in half an hour as suddenly as it had arisen; but what was the dismay to find that only two ships responded to the signal lights from the flagship! It was within a half-hour of dawn, and the ships were put about, guns fired, and through the ensuing day the fleet cruised in all directions; but nothing was seen of the missing vessel, the "Weetamoe," excepting one boat that was picked up stove, at noon. She had gone down with all on board, leaving only this trace. On her was the battalion of cavalry which comprised in its companies that of Percy's friend and old comrade, Captain Pelham, as well as the most of the artillery and some infantry.

The fleet sadly resumed its course again, and in two days saw the last of the South English coast and the islands lying north of it. Then for several days they sailed on as fast as their miserable fuel would allow, still following the Warm Current, and at last, at dawn one morning, saw land ahead. It proved to be mountainous and volcanic, and as had been surmised, turned out to consist of large islands lying in a line as far as the eye could reach from east to west. One of the volcanoes was smoking, and the tops of all the mountains were white with snow and ice. The Warm Current passed between two large islands by a winding strait, varying from three to ten miles

in breadth and about thirty in length. On either hand the mountains lay near the coast, only narrow valleys being between the foot-hills and the sea, and everywhere the land seemed covered with glaciers. At times the roar of icebergs breaking off was deafening, and where the strait narrowed, navigation was difficult and dangerous. Detached fields of ice were floating northward, and these grew more extensive as they advanced, until, upon turning a point where the passage was only about two miles wide, they came upon a floe which entirely filled the centre of the strait, leaving a lead on each side of but a few hundred feet in width. On the coast of the more southerly island an immense glacier came down to the sea at this point. The ice cliff was at least two hundred feet high, and overhung the water in a very threatening manner. The breadth of the mouth of this huge ice river was more than a mile.

The flagship entered the lead nearest the most northerly island, followed by the "Sea Mew." The other ship, the "Midgard Serpent," was about two miles behind, and heading for the southerly channel. At this time a dense fog came up the strait in front of them, and soon enveloped everything in such murky gloom that the ship's bow was invisible from the bridge. They simply drifted along for some time, when it was thought best to anchor if possible. Soundings were got at forty fathoms, and the "Bald Eagle" came to anchor, the "Sea Mew" following her example just astern.

They had lain here for an hour. General Vaughn, the Commodore, and two or three of the staff had walked forward to where the captain of the ship was talking with an old boatswain, who had been a whaler in arctic seas, and was somewhat familiar with the glaciers on the coast of Alaska. As nearly as they could judge then, they were opposite the great glacier on the further shore.

Suddenly a gun boomed from the other side of the strait, the deep roar being taken up by the echoes, and bandied about by the ice cliffs and precipices upon either shore until the air seemed alive with the crashing sound. Then another and another gun followed.

"Minute guns," said the captain, anxiously. "The 'Midgard Serpent' is in trouble; but it is impossible to get to her over these floes."

"Good Heaven! Captain," cried the old boatswain. "She must be close under that ice! The worst thing she can do is to fire guns."

It was then about eleven o'clock. The fog began to clear away rapidly. In the course of ten minutes it had risen, and the companies of the two ships strained their eyes peering across the floe, piled up in some places fifteen feet high with the rough, broken ice. They saw the "Midgard Serpent," which the floe in the further channel had crowded in almost under the terrible overhanging cliffs of the glacier, and it was apparent that she was helpless. Still they were firing guns.

As they gazed, all in a moment a horrible crash of sound almost stunned them. It was followed by a grinding, rending, thundering roar; and they saw a huge mountain of ice majestically detach itself from the face of the glacier and topple over, at first slowly, but ever gathering velocity as it plunged into the sea. It seemed hundreds of feet in longitudinal extent along the glacier's face, and of the whole height of the ice sheet. As it hurled itself into the waters a great white cloud of spray and foam flew upward, and a wave of immense proportions arose and leaped forward across the strait. It caught the unhappy ship and raised her in air as if she had been a straw, dashing her with a shivering crash on the ice floe, where she lay high and dry upon her broadside; the wave swept onward many feet above the surface of the floe, and only spent its force as it reached the open water where lay the two ships at anchor, its dispersing volume striking and raising them several feet.

But the iceberg had fallen into the water with a rolling impetus, and as it rose to establish its buoyancy, the enormous bulk, which shot up into the air at least a hundred feet in height, was seen to hang for an instant, as if in the balance, and then to begin to topple over again toward the floe. A spontaneous cry of horror burst from all the beholders as they saw the berg majestically, but with appalling swiftness, precipitate itself upon its helpless victim.

The "Midgard Serpent," and the floe upon which

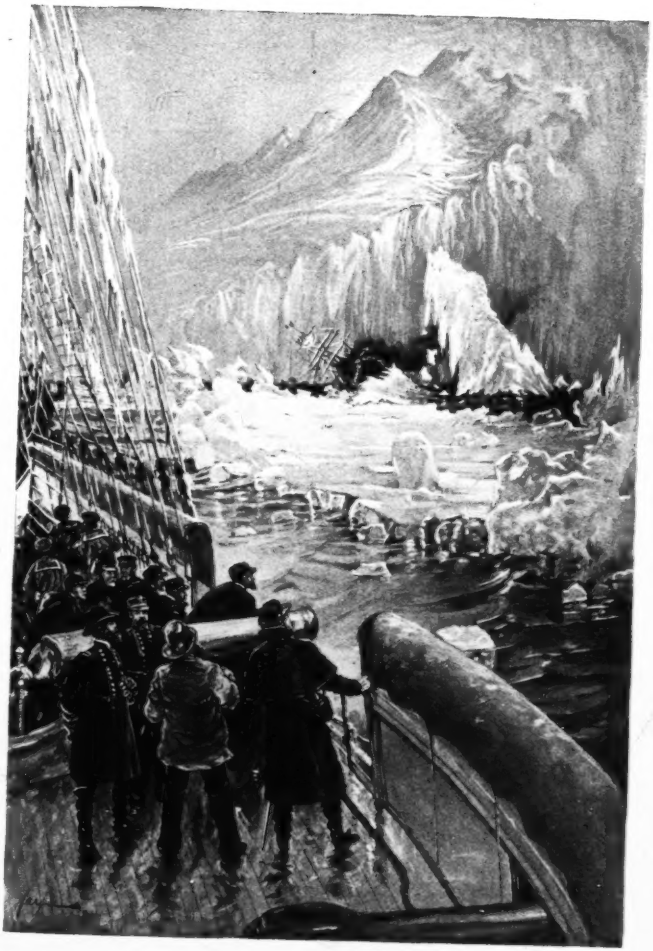
she lay, vanished like a flash beneath the titanic destroyer.

For a while the iceberg rocked and rolled, then settled quietly upon the waves, its great translucent pinnacles gleaming with exquisite beauty in the bright sunbeams dancing about them, as in scintillating mockery of the sickened hearts of those who had helplessly watched the awful catastrophe; and there it towered, a monument of ghastly magnificence, above the icy ocean grave of seven hundred brave men.

Every one, officer and man alike, seemed paralyzed by what they had witnessed. For hours few words were spoken, and no movements made toward getting under way. None knew how soon a similar fate might be looked for by the surviving ships.

Meanwhile the ice floe moved slowly on in the current, and by the middle of the afternoon there were some miles of clear water ahead of them, except that here and there icebergs, mostly small ones, were floating along. The one which had crushed the "Midgard Serpent" had grounded upon a reef which made out from the southerly island, and lay about a mile away, where the channel widened again between the islands to some five miles.

Finally they weighed anchor and began to steam slowly ahead, using the lead constantly, but keeping well in the middle of the strait. Before the short period of darkness had set in, they had the broad ocean before them, although they were dismayed to



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find fields of ice stretching away to the horizon on every hand. Many bergs were in sight, moving northward with the rest of the ice. The strait was some ten miles wide, where it opened upon the sea. The shores of the lands on either side were lower and less mountainous than they had been, so that a wide expanse of ocean was visible, but no open water could be seen from the masthead, except a small space to the northeastward along the coast. The broad entrance to the strait was packed with floes and bergs, although the current had borne them on as far as this point with comparative speed. The general movement northward of the ice was plainly checked by a strong north wind which was blowing, and from the position and movements of some bergs, the old boatswain who had been so much in arctic seas said that either the Warm Current turned after leaving the strait, or what was more likely, there were counter-currents which set these bergs in apparently contrary directions, although, after observing them for some hours, they appeared insensibly to be borne northward in a general drift. Meanwhile nothing could be done better than to moor the ships to the edge of the floe, which was for the time stationary. Here they lay for the night.

About sunrise the wind shifted to westerly, and soon after the floe was found to be in motion, and from the masthead it was seen that a change was taking place in the condition of the ice field outside the strait. The Warm Current was now seen to set

northwesterly, and it was to a certain extent free of ice as far as its course could be traced, although there were some bergs floating in it. It was possible that by following it they might the sooner extricate themselves from the ice, and it was decided to be best to proceed; for to remain where they were was very dangerous. Large bergs might at any hour come down on them from the glaciers bordering this channel; and if they should anchor in the clear water next the coast, a setting in of the ice, or "pack," would crush, or force them on shore. They managed to make considerable progress by noon, although still the ice bounded the horizon. The "Bald Eagle" was ahead, and had reached a large extent of fairly open water. The "Sea Mew" had passed around the other side of a berg, concealing her from view, when the sound of a signal gun broke the otherwise awful stillness. It echoed and re-echoed among the floating ice mountains about them, and the "Bald Eagle" was at once headed across the open "lead" so as to get sight of the "Sea Mew" beyond the berg. To their dismay she was seen careened almost on her beam ends. What had happened was but too evident. She had been caught in a "nip" and crushed against a low berg. Her people were getting upon the floe as rapidly as possible and unloading what they could, using the utmost despatch, of her cargo and stores. The boats were launched upon the ice. The flagship instantly steamed up to the edge of the floe and made fast to

it. A petty officer from the "Sea Mew" soon came hurrying as fast as the rough ice would allow.

"We shall have to come aboard you, sir," he cried to the captain, as soon as he was within hearing; "the bottom of the 'Sea Mew' is cut out of her." Even as he spoke the "nip" relaxed about the fated ship, and she righted, sliding off the ice only to go down instantly. The crew and soldiers of her company managed to cross the ice, bringing the sick, and also their boats and such stores as could be saved, and were taken on board the "Bald Eagle," which resumed her perilous way, using every precaution to avoid a like fate.

Meantime the sufferings were great. The cold was severe, the ship was crowded to her utmost capacity. The guns and everything else which could be spared were thrown overboard to make room. All hands were put on short rations, and to crown all, a dangerous form of fever broke out.

For ten days they were among the ice before they could extricate themselves, but finally reached the open sea in longitude a little east of Cape Horn. A council of war was called, and it was determined, without a dissenting voice, to try to make the best of their way to Rio Janeiro and thence to return to New York. They were in very miserable condition even for that voyage. The ship had been strained among the ice, was leaking badly; the fuel, poor as it was, had to be husbanded carefully; and the weather was threatening. It soon appeared indispensable to try

to make the nearest port they could in South America. In case of disaster there were not boats enough to save half the people on board. They went on, however, and (the weather being only moderately bad on the average) had reached a latitude where they might reasonably expect to come across vessels, when a terrible storm came on.

Up to that time not a sail had been seen. They seemed alone on the seas. The fever was increasing, the sick dying very fast, and the distress was terrible. The storm lasted three days. They had the greatest difficulty in keeping the ship afloat. The leak constantly increased, and by the time blue sky appeared again she had settled materially in the water. Everything had been done that good seamanship could suggest, but all to no purpose, and finally the masts were cut away, all spare spars got on deck, and they set to work building rafts and getting ready stores to put on them, for it was certain that the ship could not float many hours. In fact, by sunrise of the fifth day, the sea having subsided, the rafts were launched and stores put on board, and the work of loading the sick in the boats was begun. By noon the steamer was so low in the water that she threatened to go down at any moment, and the only chance was to abandon her and take to the boats and rafts. The last men to quit the ship were General Vaughn, the Commodore, and Percy. These three embarked in separate boats, Percy being on board one laden with many sick men, and in charge of the fourth officer of

the "Bald Eagle." Ten minutes after their leaving the steamer she plunged forward, staggering under water as a mortally wounded horse falls to the earth; and these hundreds of miserables were afloat, in almost untraversed seas, in frail boats and on flimsy rafts, sick, starving, exhausted, dying, but still making a brave fight for life.

Everything depended upon a quiet sea, and their promptly meeting a vessel, whether a man of them all ever saw land again. As yet no sail had appeared. They tried to set their course due north, hoping to be able to reach the southern extremity of South America.

But they were doomed. After a day and a half of comparatively quiet weather, a storm set in from the northeast, and the boats and rafts were soon separated. Percy and his companions found themselves at nightfall out of sight of all the others. The gale was increasing.

Percy does not attempt to describe the horrors of the succeeding night. The cold severe, the boat overloaded, torrents of rain and hail, the sea constantly rising. One by one the wretches succumbed to cold and exhaustion, and were thrown overboard to lighten the boat. Toward morning there were but seven left, and they so weak as to be unable to move. Percy remembers no more of this scene. He thought he slept.

When he regained consciousness and opened his eyes, he found himself in a berth on board of a ship,

with several people standing around him, one administering stimulants. They were talking unintelligibly at first, but soon he grew strong enough to understand that they were speaking Spanish. Upon looking again he saw they were in uniform, and at length comprehended that he was on board of a Spanish man-of-war. As soon as he was able he told them of the boats and rafts which had left the "Bald Eagle," loaded to the water's edge with people; and to his great relief the ship was instantly put about and headed for the locality about where the survivors, if any, might yet be found. They cruised for two days, firing guns and using every effort to find the shipwrecked unfortunates, but to no purpose. His rescuers told him that he was the only living person on board the boat when they had picked it up on the evening before. He was unable to give them any further information as to who he was, or in relation to the lost ship, for he soon became very ill, having taken the fever which had proved so fatal to the people on board the "Bald Eagle." All that the Spaniards could gather from him was that an American man-of-war or transport had gone down. He was delirious until after his Spanish friends parted from him at Rio, where they put in, and where Percy was taken to the house of an American merchant, and most kindly cared for.

The family with whom he found himself when he grew well enough to be conscious of his condition and surroundings proved to be most agreeable and

hospitable people. Nothing which could be done for his comfort was omitted. He received the most tender and delicate care, and the most refined sympathy. His host was a thoroughly loyal man, devoted, as far as one so distant from home could be, to the cause of the Union.

As soon as Percy grew well enough to talk, he gave his friends to understand that he had been an officer on board of a transport carrying troops for an expedition which had sailed for the west coast under sealed orders (which was indeed the case), and which had met with shipwreck and the loss of every man but himself. He thought best not to communicate more, relative to the destination of the expedition; and he was well aware that a full account of the adventures of the fleet and army would have been regarded as the invention of a madman or an impostor.

It was February before he was strong enough to start for home, and then he found that the most certain course was to take a mail-steamer for Europe, rather than to try to reach New York direct from Rio Janeiro. Leaving his kind friends there with warmest expressions of gratitude, he sailed, and, arriving on the Continent in good season, crossed to England, being just in time to catch a steamer for New York.

He reached home during the last days of the siege of Richmond. Having written out his report while on the voyage, he hastened, upon his arrival, to Washington, where he delivered it at the War Office.

But it was evident that his report of the new discoveries of lands and nations, so accidentally made, was neither understood nor appreciated. Indeed, a high official, who had but glanced over it, said to him in a hurried interview: "Captain Percy, I am free to confess that I can scarcely comprehend, and indeed have but cast a desultory regard over your long story. I have no doubt it is of great interest, to be considered at some future time; but it is impossible, sir, to give it, or any other side issue, any attention at the present tremendous crisis. I am very sorry to find you the sole survivor of the ill-fated expedition, which would appear to have been wrecked off Cape Horn. I congratulate you on having been rescued.

"You must excuse me from further communication with you to-day, or indeed for the present. You will to-morrow receive your commission as major in the ——th United States Cavalry, and will be detailed, at your own request, to serve for the coming campaign on the staff of your friend General L——. Seven days' leave of absence is granted, that you may visit your home. I wish you good-night, sir."

So Percy hurried on to Boston to pass a few days with his sister before reporting for duty to General L——.

And now, Captain Arthur Percy's diary containing henceforward only blank leaves, it becomes necessary for the chronicler of these events to appear in person upon the scene.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRAGEDY.

"Who art thou, lovely misty form
That haunt'st our bivouac to-night?"

"Thy lost love's wraith; and, warrior bold,
Thy young life's tale is well-nigh told!
Although thy heart leaps high and warm,
Yet shall it lie full still and cold
When thee my loving arms enfold
At battle's close, to-morrow night."

Old Song.

WHEN Arthur Percy was about departing on the fatal expedition, he begged my mother, who had been a dear friend of his own mother, to receive his orphaned sister Catherine into her home and heart. The sweet lady was only too grateful for the opportunity of extending her protection and care over the young girl, who became at once as her own daughter.

Meanwhile, in the latter part of December I had been severely wounded in an obscure skirmish in Virginia, and after being some weeks in hospital, had been sent home on an extended sick leave.

I had found this beautiful girl at home in my mother's house. She had matured since I had last seen her, which was years before, when she was but a school-girl.

Now, if a charming young creature is thrown much into the society of a youth fresh from the field of glory, and with the scars of battle yet smarting upon him, the consequence is apt not to be other than — well, our case was a fair illustration of the natural and logical sequence.

So when Captain Arthur Percy arrived at his home, he found a state of affairs existing with reference to his friend and his sister which afforded him the liveliest satisfaction. Nothing, it seemed, could have given him more pleasure.

"My dear fellow," said he to me, "it is the one thing which I should have wished for her."

I found that he was going down to the army on the third day after this, and I determined to accompany him, although hardly fit as yet to take the field. But the last campaign was really on, and I had been commissioned as major in the regiment during my convalescence, and could not endure being away from the front, if I could possibly sit in the saddle. I was the more anxious to go with him because his friend General L—— was the brilliant leader of the cavalry division in which was our regiment, and we should be in a measure together.

When I communicated my determination to him, he said, after a moment's thought, "Tom, I want you and Catherine to be married to-morrow. It is best. I want to see her your wife before I — that is, I may not last the campaign out. I feel this strongly. And

I should be happier if anything happened — you know."

I was much startled, but of course supremely happy at the idea.

Thus my own romance was accomplished. The beautiful Catherine Percy became my bride.

I will not allude to the partings, with the pain and distress of the scene.

Arthur Percy and I started for the front. Arthur had not given us any detailed account of the fatal expedition while at home. There was no fitting time, and perhaps he did not wish to speak of it. The horrors which attended its ending probably yet haunted him.

But on our journey he told me as briefly as possible the particulars of the story, and also said that he had left his diary and papers under seal with Catherine, for me to use as I saw fit, in case he did not survive the campaign. I confess that I was much troubled at his story. It all seemed logical enough, and there was nothing in his manner or state of mind in itself which seemed to suggest that his brain was affected; but still the improbability of a great part of his tale was too great to allow of its being seriously considered as an actual record of occurrences. To be frank, I concluded that the sufferings and hardships of the shipwreck had unbalanced his mind.

Of course I expressed not a syllable of this; but doubtless my silence and evident anxiety impressed him. He had ended his account an hour before we

reached Washington, where he was obliged to report. We were to spend the night there and start for the front in the morning. After finishing supper at the hotel, he asked me to come to our room. When we were there he said: —

"Tom, I am not at all surprised that you are grieved and worried over my story. And it 's perfectly reasonable that you think my mind affected. Don't start, old boy; it is quite natural that you should. I am well aware that my account seems utterly inadmissible in most particulars. But now see what I have here, and explain if you can how these things could exist unless they were authentic. Here are some letters of General Vaughn in his own hand, written to me in South England. Here are two or three of his orders, signed by Oldham, Assistant Adjutant-General of the army there. You know the handwriting of both, and you were personally acquainted with them. Here is the very despatch of Vaughn to Warren, received by us in the South English camp of Angus the night before the battle of Humber Fens. Here is a Northumbrian dagger given me by the Percy himself, Earl of Northumberland. See the Percy arms, inlaid in gold in the blade. Is n't that mediæval? Did you notice this sapphire ring, — my betrothal ring, Tom, — given me by Kate Percy? Was that stone ever cut in that strange way by European lapidary, or that ring wrought by modern goldsmith?

"Now here is the gold swan bracelet, or rather

armlet, which poor Vivienne Dacre gave me for — for Kate" (the poor fellow choked), — "and — and now, Tom, look! Here is the miniature." He drew it from over his heart. "And here, Tom, is her letter to me at Eagle's Crag! Think of it, Tom! O Tom, think of it!" He buried his face in his hands and broke down utterly in his bereavement and misery.

> "Talk not of grief, till thou hast seen
> The tears of warlike men,"

says Mrs. Hemans. I involuntarily threw my arm around him.

I looked at these things as in a dream. I was perfectly astounded; for I doubted no longer. He wanted me to read the letter. I did so.

But the tremendous moment of the discoveries made by the expedition — of his experiences, now that I realized them — was so intensely exciting that I sprang up and walked the room in a state of mind wrought up to the highest pitch.

"Arthur," I cried, "you should never go to the front again. You should see the President and place this matter before him, together with these proofs, in such a light that an expedition would be sent at once to this antarctic land. Why, man! 'T is a discovery more wonderful in many ways than that of Columbus. A continent found in waters not traversed for the past four hundred years! English and French speaking nations! Think what fame for yourself and glory for your country!"

"Ah," he replied sadly, "let us first see if we have a country. This campaign will decide that, however, and, I believe with all my faith, in the affirmative. No, Tom, the fighting may be short, but it will be sharp, and I must be in at the death. After that we will try to convince the government that I 'm not mad, and am able to lead an expedition which shall carry 'Old Glory' to these strange seas again. And what will it not mean to me to go there once more?" he added with vehement feeling and concentrated passion of utterance.

I slept little that night; an unwise wakefulness, for we needed every moment's rest that we could get to build up for the hard work ahead. The next morning we started for the front, after Percy's call at the War Office. We reached the division in good time. It was with Sheridan. You know, reader, what that meant. But I will not weary you with details of active service, which are technical and tiresome.

We went through Five Forks, and considerable other fighting, and remained unhurt. Our losses had been heavy, however, especially in officers. Promotions were rapid in those days, and I found myself in a short time lieutenant-colonel commanding the regiment.

It was the night before Sailor's Creek. We had just heard of the magnificent exploit of a handful of the Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, under their heroic young colonel, at High Bridge, where they had been extirpated after such furious fighting with

two divisions of Confederate cavalry that the retreat of the whole rebel army had been stayed for a considerable time, and we were thus enabled to cut them off as we did.

We had been in the advance, pushing fiercely on, and, almost completely exhausted, were compelled at midnight to halt for a few hours' rest. I had not met Arthur for two days, and was very glad to see him coming to where I was sitting on a great log before my fire, after having personally attended to the placing of pickets. We were close on to the enemy, who lay in a wood beyond some open ground next the hill where our brigade had halted, which was more or less wooded. A cedar thicket stood near the spot where I was, on the extreme left, with a path running through it leading toward our vedettes on that side.

"Hallo, Arthur," I called, "glad to see you! Come and sit down and get warm. To-morrow will be hot enough though, won't it, according to all indications?"

"Probably, for those who see it," he replied gravely. "I am glad to find you, Tom," he added in a tired voice. "I have something to say."

Some peculiar, indescribable thing about his manner and air attracted my attention closely. Still I did not wish to seem to watch him, although I was strangely moved by this something which was inexplicable.

Sir Walter Scott speaks, in certain of his novels, of an expression used in Scotland in regard to a

person who is near his death, and who shows this in some way mysterious to all but those who can read occult signs. Such a man is said to be *fey*.

I thought of this as I looked at Percy; and with the idea already in my mind, I was not the less apprehensive after what he told me.

"I have tried to see you all day, Tom," he said; "but fate has ordered otherwise. I do not know what you will think when I tell you that I have seen Kate Percy."

"Oh, Arthur, Arthur," I cried, "what can this mean? You are overtired, and have allowed your mind to dwell —"

"Don't, Tom, please," he said very wearily; "I am very tired, but not more so than you — than we all are. I can stay with you but a few moments. The General asked me to ride over to the left at midnight and see that all was right there. 'T is now nine minutes of twelve. I will tell you. Last night when we halted I looked for you, not knowing that you had gone forward to secure the hill in front. I was very tired, but also so singularly affected mentally that I could not think of sleep. Still I lay down, but soon rose, and was walking up and down in the wood where we were, when I both felt and saw a little hand passed around my left arm. I involuntarily drew the arm closer to my side, and another hand clasped the first, and thus they were folded on my arm. I was not even startled, Tom. I looked down, and, Tom, my darling was hanging on my arm as she did all

THE PARTING. — Page 241.

that afternoon on the beach below the crags of Ravensclyffe. The same sweet, bright, radiant smile, the same gentle voice, the exquisite violet eyes, the — Tom, I can't describe her beauty. It all seemed perfectly natural. And oh, how happy we were! I think we walked up and down for hours. At any rate she had but just left me, and I had lain down again, when the trumpets blew. I was not fatigued by the night spent so, but the fresher this morning. And I am happy, Tom, — more happy than I can tell. I know that she is no more in this world; and the last thing she said, after all our dear talk, was, 'I will come again to-morrow night, my darling, and then you will go with me, — and we shall part no more.'".

I watched Arthur all the time he was speaking. The strange look never left his face. It seemed full of a nameless peace. I could not speak; for although I felt that he had but seen a vision in his sleep, yet I was perfectly sure that all was to be as he said. Still, the dreadful certainty was so oppressive that I lost all self-control. The grief of losing him seemed so appalling that I involuntarily threw both arms round him, as if I would never let him go. All sorts of wild thoughts surged through my brain, as I tried to think how he could be protected against the dangers of the coming day.

So we sat for a while. Then Arthur, turning, kissed me simply, and with his old smile, — the sweetest I ever saw in man, — said: —

"Good-night, Tom. It is time for me to go now. Kiss my little sister for me, and tell her that I was more than happy that she is yours. You will go back safely to her, Tom. I know it."

He mounted his horse and rode slowly down the path to the left, into the cedars. I saw him by the firelight turn and smile once again, and then he vanished in the shadows of the wood.

I sat looking into the fire, wrapped in dismal thinking. A few moments after he had gone, my orderly came to me with letters. The mail-carrier had come up, with the Second Brigade, which had just joined us.

The first I saw was from my wife, and I cut it open with impatient haste. There were twelve pages, and I was devouring it, spell-bound.

All at once the report of a rifle on the extreme left of the line seemed to shatter the air. It was caught up, and echoed and re-echoed strangely.

I could not account for the sharpness of the sound. Several shots had been fired on the line earlier in the night, but not one had begun to be so loud as this was. However, I was soon absorbed again in the letters.

Suddenly I felt a strange, incomprehensible chill, and became aware that some one was sitting beside me on the left hand. I glanced up, and was surprised to see that it was Percy.

And now for this, and for what follows, reader, I can no more account than can you. All I know is that it was!

"Hallo, Arthur," I said. "I'm right glad to see you back. I have a letter here from Catherine."

I continued reading. He did not speak. At last, uneasy, I looked at his face, and was thunderstruck to see its extreme white, waxy look. His eyes were fixed in a stony gaze at the gloom over beyond the fire.

"Arthur," said I, very anxiously, "what is the trouble with you?" He replied in a strange voice, that sounded as if it came from far away, and very slowly.

"My troubles are over, my brother. Hark! There they come. They are bringing It."

I heard a clanking of scabbards and a measured tramp down the forest path. "I must meet It," he said. "Good-night!"

"Meet what?" I asked, taking his right hand. It was icy cold, and stiff as that of the dead. He rose, smiling, and pointed to the wood, turning his full face to me.

I shrank back gasping with deadly horror, and caught at a limb for support. The whole left side of his face was drenched in blood, which poured from a hole near the temple.

He turned away and strode noiselessly toward the path. As soon as I could gather myself I sprang after him, calling, "Arthur! Arthur!" Then he disappeared in the gloom of the wood. I rushed after, and just at the entrance to the path came suddenly on four troopers of my old squadron, under a

grizzled sergeant. They bore something on an improvised stretcher of poles.

"Did you meet Major Percy just a moment since, Sergeant Gaunt?" I cried.

"Did we *meet* him?" repeated the man, in an awed voice. "He is here, Colonel. He was killed on the line twenty minutes ago, by that shot."

He lifted the overcoat cape from the face of the corpse.

There he lay, the left side of the head covered with blood from a hole near the temple!

. . . . . .

The morning after the surrender of Appomattox, I started for home with Arthur Percy's body. On the evening succeeding the burial, Catherine and I were sitting together looking at the afterglow which had followed a sunset which was rare even in that region of beautiful sunsets, where the crimson and gold clouds spread a halo of glorious light over the blue hills beyond the Charles.

"How Arthur would have enjoyed this!" she said. "What an eye he had for all that was fine in nature and in art! When I was a girl he taught me not only to love these things, but how to see them."

She was very quiet and calm now, although she had grieved so dreadfully at first that I had feared for her life. As we sat there I told her Arthur's story; and we took out his diaries and papers, which we afterward read in full. I delivered to my wife the things which Arthur had intrusted to me, and those

which were found on his body. It had been discovered that not only had he been shot in the head, but there was also a bullet in his heart. This had gone through the corner of Kate Percy's miniature, fortunately not harming it materially. He had also on his breast with the miniature her letter written to him while at Eagle's Crag. It was uninjured.

It was probably written on paper given her by Percy while at Ravensclyffe; it was not on the coarse, dark, thick paper used by the South English, a piece or two of which we found among Arthur's documents. The handwriting was quaint, some of the characters being of a very ancient style, but on the whole, plain, and fairly easy to read. It ran thus: —

To myne honoured Lord and Betrothedde Husband, the noble captayne Arthur Piercie, at the Castle Keepe of the Eagle hys Cragge — These by the fayre hande and gentil courtesye of the noble maide Lady Vivienne Dacre. Greetynge —

O, my dere sweeteheart, happelye blythe be I so may I again speke to the, een in these silente words of wrytynge. Yet beare thei the lovynge thought in my heart unto the. Coulde spokenne words more?

I am to sai unto the that the lovelye and heartbroke Vivienne Dacre be here. And strange though it seeme to the, as to me, she cometh in soreste dole to knowe of my lippes an I be in goode soothe thyne owne betrowthedde maide and bryde. And knowing now this to be indeede soothe, weping threwe she her selfe on her kneese, prayinge myne pardon and grace for that she lovedde the and so

hadde avowedde to the. And roundlye I warrante me hadde I answeredde her, but that I beheldde her in so dolourouse case, and ere I mighte speke, tolde she me she was the day agone at the Cloisteres of Sainte Helenes, and that she woulde, sans noviciate, take the veil, Yuletide paste, and spende lyfe in penaunce for the sin that she lovedde the.

And wer it sin to love the, myne Arthur? Then wer I the wickedeste sinner in Southe Englande.

But knewe she not of our vowes atwixte us, poore chylde. Innocente enow wer she, and hath my pitye. She thought the free of mayden her vowes, yet fyndynge not so, her heartstrynges snappedde.

And she be marveyllouslye hurte by her griefes, nor consyderynge her mynd, be there lykelyhoode that she eer spede happelye more. Verelye coulde I somewhat wepe for her, for she wer myne own dere frende and hadde beene utterlye loyall to me in this parte.

Eche nyght walke I in slumbe. wyth the on the sandes beneathe the cragges at Ravensclyffe. And marveyllous joyouse be I untill hatefulle dawne sodayne awakenethe me to my heavye longynges for the once more. Ryght gladde were I yf I mighte slomber untill thy returne, myne Arthur, wyttynge of noughte else.

Yet somewhat saith to me that we be not for long sunderedde. Of that I am blythe. I pray the saintes al dayes to guarde the wel.

Vivienne hath made me to knowe of thy dauntlesse defence of the Eagle hys Cragge. I muche trembledde at thy peril, and yet be I lovyngelye proude that my captayne so gallantlye bore himselfe and as gentil knight did hys devoir. But prythe, Arthur, have greate care of thy yonge lyfe, whiche is certaynelye al myne owne.